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Legislator, NATO Aide Discuss START II Ratification Process

PM1803132393 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 1

[Vladimir Vladimirov report from the "From Our News Bureau" roundup: "Admiral Paul Miller Met With Chairman of Russian Federation Supreme Soviet Defense and Security Committee"]

[Text] At Russia's White House 16 March Admiral Paul Miller, commander in chief of NATO Allied Armed Forces in the Atlantic, who is in Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Federation defense minister, and parliamentary committee chairman Sergey Stepashin discussed the ratification of the START II Treaty.

It was noted during the talks that the treaty ratification process is progressing with some difficulty in the Supreme Soviet, as proved by the first round of parliamentary hearings which took place at the beginning of March. But Sergey Stepashin hopes that the treaty will be ratified.

The interlocutors devoted much attention to NATO's new role following the end of the cold war. In particular, questions of the prospects for cooperation between NATO structures and the Russian Armed Forces within the CSCE framework were broached.

Grib on Start I, Military Pacts With Russia

WS1903084093 Minsk RESPUBLIKA in Russian 23 Feb 93 p 5

[Interview with Mecheslav Ivanavich Grib, chairman of the Supreme Council Committee for National Security, Defense, and Crime, by newspaper correspondent Rozija Khodzhaeva: "Belarus Is A Nonnuclear State, So It Will Not Become a Nuclear Target"; place and date not given—first two paragraphs are introduction]

[Text] According to our previous reports, the Supreme Council at a closed plenary session ratified the international agreements on nuclear topics: on the reduction and limitation of the strategic offensive arms (Start-I); the so-called 1992 Lisbon protocol on weapon types, which was signed by four nuclear states—Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan; the agreement between Belarus and Russia on the coordination of action in the military sphere, and the agreement on the Strategic Forces temporarily stationed on Belarusian territory. All these agreements came into force on 4 February, 1993.

Mecheslav Ivanavich Grib, chairman of the Supreme Council Committee for National Security, Defense, and Crime, comments on these agreements in his interview with our correspondent Rozija Khodzhaeva.

[Grib] The first two agreements—Start I and the Lisbon agreement—were ratified without any difficulties. Long before 4 February, Belarus had declared its course toward a nuclear-free and neutral status, and since that time it has been constantly following this promise. As for the Belarusian-Russian agreements, there were some disputes on their signing.

In my opinion, we should maintain good neighbor relations with Russia, our close neighbor. We are closely connected with Russia. Issues of arms supply, military and technical maintenance, the design of new weapons, and the teaching of staff are simply impossible without close cooperation. We have concluded interstate agreements on these issues. None of these agreements contradicts the Declaration of Belarusian sovereignty, and none of them is detrimental to Belarusian national interests.

[Khodzhaeva] People think that Belarus's refusal to keep its nuclear arms can lead to the loss of its independence. Can these agreements harm Belarus?

[Grib] This is the first time in world history that a small state has voluntarily refused to possess weapons of mass destruction and agreed to give them to its strong nuclear neighbor. Of course, Belarus is the first on this list, but we are sure that nuclear countries are not needed at all to ensure peace on the earth. As for our defense, we never had the codes for the nuclear missiles, so we were not their owners. First, it is difficult to imagine our potential enemy, but please, be sure, that the nuclear response would be rapid. You cannot doubt this fact. Being a nuclear target for other nuclear states means living in constant danger. Is this the kind of defense that we need? I am sure that the image of a nonnuclear power will not damage our international prestige. Second, we will get some money for selling uranium, which will be extracted from the dismantled nuclear warheads.

[Khodzhaeva] According to the Lisbon agreement, the withdrawal of Russian Strategic Forces from the Belarusian territory to Russia is to be accomplished within seven years. But the mass media and official circles are speaking about a two to three year period.

[Grib] I would not speak about any definite period. The terms of the troop withdrawal depend on political, economic, and technical prerequisites. In general, everything that is connected with the disarmament issues demands a lot of deep and detailed work, and haste is out of the question. Let us speak about the restationing of the personnel of the Russian Strategic Forces. More than 30,000 servicemen are servicing the nuclear objects and nuclear arms on our territory. They are officers and warrant officers. There are no housing and other facilities for them yet in Russia. Can we demand their immediate withdrawal to Russia? We must solve a lot of problems, but in a civilized manner.

[Khodzhaeva] As far as I know, the "heavy missiles" will be withdrawn to Russia. But, first, it is dangerous to dismantle them, second, they demand special trucks for transportation. Financial costs will be great. Did you count these costs for Belarus? What about the nuclear and ecological security?

[Grib] The nuclear arms will be withdrawn from our territory and dismantled in Russia. Russia will finance the transportation and restationing of the troops. Belarus will not demand any customs duties from Russia. In addition, the agreement provides mutual release from the transit taxes for the Belarusian and Russian units and formations participating in maneuvers and training on Belarusian and Russian territories.

[Khodzhaeva] Who will control the withdrawal of arms, technical equipment, and the Russian Army property?

[Grib] First of all, expert commissions, including those from the International Atomic Energy Agency. In addition, the Council of Ministers organized a special commission from the members of the Committee for State Property. In my opinion, all the organizational issues have been solved. Currently, an intergovernmental agreement on the status of these formations and on the duration of their withdrawal is under way.

Opposition Parliamentarians Cited on START II Drawbacks

MK1903053993 Moscow MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI in Russian No.12, 21 Mar 93 p A14

["MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI International Department" report under "The World and Us" rubric: "START-II: A Way Out or a Trap for Russia?"]

[Excerpt] The Supreme Soviet debate that began in March on the ratification of the START-II treaty signed by Boris Yeltsin and George Bush on 3 January 1993 has been distinguished, as expected, by fierce attacks from its opponents. It is clear to anybody that the attacks were prompted not so much by the provisions of the treaty itself, but by their hostility to the fundamentals of Boris Yeltsin's political course. In this respect the struggle over the ratification of START-II will undoubtedly become an integral part of the opposition's efforts aimed against the incumbent president.

At the same time, since it is a specific document that is under discussion, the leaders of the "intransigent" opposition appear to understand that rhetoric alone is not sufficient and that they need some concrete arguments. Let us cite some of them.

Deputy Pavlov: "The United States has always dreamed of getting rid of the threat of an assured nuclear counterstrike from Russia. START-II enables it to achieve this end."

Deputy Tarasov: "It is the MIRV-ed ICBM's that constitute the bulk of our nuclear missile deterrent forces and give Russia at least technically the status of a great power. Liquidating them would mean that this status was abolished and the country's defense capability undermined. Calculations show that, if START-II is adopted, the United States will achieve an overwhelming superiority (by 36 times) in terms of all indicators of strategic power: the number of nuclear weapons [boyezaryad], their accuracy, and their yield—which is bound to undermine strategic parity..."

Deputy Sevastyanov: "Only 17 percent of our strategic expenditure on nuclear weapons went on strategic missiles, whereas 83 percent went on submarines and nuclear bombers. What will be cut as a result of the treaty are precisely our cheapest weapons. So we are losing out here even in purely economic terms."

A number of other arguments are advanced against ratification. For example: Why did we sign a treaty with the outgoing Bush administration, and is there is an element of conspiracy here? Or: START-II will draw Russia into a ruinous disarmament race and will cost it several tens of trillions of rubles.

START-II is certainly a very complex treaty. So is Russia's situation. It therefore quite understandably raises questions even among those who do not consider themselves in opposition to the president's line. At least the debate has shown a desire on the part of some deputies to seriously understand what the treaty really means for Russia. [passage omitted]

Kozyrev, Baltic Ministers Clash at Helsinki Meeting

PM1903090993 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 7

[Aleksey Boldinyuk article: "Dispute Over the Baltic Commissioner"]

[Text] Helsinki, 17 Mar—The foreign ministers of the Baltic Sea countries have held their second meeting in Helsinki. When the Council of the Baltic Sea States [CBSS] was set up in Copenhagen a year ago its proclaimed aim was to achieve mutual understanding among the 10 member countries on economic and cultural cooperation questions. The Helsinki meeting showed that the CBSS is hardly going to be viable unless it starts discussing the most urgent questions.

In the opinion of the Russian foreign minister, who spoke in the Marina Congress Center, the threat of nationalism and chauvinism are prime issues in this regard. A. Kozyrev put forward a tough demand for the institution within the council of the post of commissioner for human rights and the protection of ethnic minorities. The Estonian and Latvian foreign ministers immediately opposed the creation of such a post. According to the Baltic states' ministers, there is no need to duplicate the work of the existing CSCE structures.

The Russian minister's concern at the position of the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic states was not reflected in the official speeches of the Baltic states' ministers. In their opinion, the problem of withdrawing the Russian troops as soon as possible is far more urgent.

However, the Russian minister was not particularly persistent in defending his position. Immediately after his speech he unexpectedly flew back to Moscow, leaving his hosts and the participants in the meeting bewildered. The official version is that A. Kozyrev had to attend talks with the French president. However, Mitterrand's visit was known about beforehand and Kozyrev's surprise departure raised quite a few questions here.

Today the CBSS approved in principle the idea of instituting the post of CBSS commissioner for human rights and questions of ethnic minorities. That announcement is contained in the Council session's final communique, which has just been adopted. The Council instructed the committee of senior officials and the working group on assisting democratic institutions to continue work on these questions.

It has been announced here that the next CBSS session will take place in Tallinn in March 1994.

NATO To Conduct Naval Maneuvers With Former Soviet Forces

OW1803213693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1726 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Currently the NATO Naval command is developing plans to conduct joint maneuvers with the naval forces of the former Soviet republics, the commander of the allied NATO forces in the Atlantic Admiral Paul Miller declared at a press conference in St. Petersburg on Thursday [18 March]. According to Miller, the NATO SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander in Europe] John Shalikashvili is to make a final decision on this issue.

The admiral noted that such military exercises "are not aimed against any concrete probable adversary." "This is a common training aimed at improving our own capabilities," he stressed.

On the whole, as a result of the USSR collapse, the present situation causes changes in the NATO strategy. "Now we are revising the structure of the armed forces in the Atlantic and planning to cut down the strength of the forces maintaining the highest level of alert," he pointed out.

UN Representative Calls For Rapid Strengthening of CIS

LD1903104093 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1010 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Boris Shabayev]

[Text] Geneva March 19 TASS—"A rapid strengthening of the Commonwealth of Independent States as a qualitatively new regional organisation on the Euroasian continent would meet not only the interests of its members, but of the United Nations as a whole, as well as of the entire world community," ITAR-TASS was told by Vladimir Petrovskiy, U.N. assistant secretary and director-general of the U.N. office in Geneva.

"In the current conditions, when the old system of international relations, left over from the 'Cold War', is being scrapped and a new one, based on the U.N. Charter, is being created, the leadership of the U.N. Secretariat attaches great importance not only to the strengthening of the global structure of international security, represented by the United Nations Organisation, but also to the establishment of regional structures," Petrovskiy said.

"The destructive nature of changes now occurring in our world may be reduced to the minimum and made really democratic and evolutionary only through their joint efforts at global and regional levels. In light of this, we are following very closely the process of the CIS' formation as a regional organisation closely linked with the CSCE and the United Nations," Petrovskiy noted.

"For its part, the United Nations is prepared to promote very close cooperation with the CIS as a regional organisation. I wish to note with satisfaction that one of my first steps as director- general of the U.N. European office was to answer a letter received from the coordinator of the Consultative Coordinating Committee of the CIS Heads of State Council. I officially informed it that we were interested not only in establishing relations with the Commonwealth and promoting regular information exchange, but also in holding corresponding consultations and exchanging views," Petrovskiy stated.

ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 19 Mar

LD1903074293 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0655 GMT 19 Mar 93

["Press Review"—ITAR-TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow March 19 (ITAR-TASS)—NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA frontpages an article about Ruslan Khasbulatov's tour of Belarus and Ukraine. According to the newspaper, "now it is the new Commonwealth that will become for the attacking speaker of the Russian parliament another battlefield for the prerogatives, which are slipping through the fingers of the president."

PRAVDA carries an interview with Chairman of parliament of Karelia Viktor Stepanov, who took part in the recent extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies. He believes that misgivings about the "explosive situation in the country" are being exaggerated now. In his opinion, both the president, the parliament and the Constitutional Court—all who hold power in their hands—are well aware of their responsibility before the nation. "There will be no vacuum of power in the country, of course on condition that everyone, irrespective of his post, will observe the Constitution and the laws," Stepanov said.

The press reports that Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who is now having vacation, promptly responded to the recent appeal of President Yeltsin to the heads of the CIS member states. NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA publishes a letter, sent by Nazarbayev to Yeltsin, in which the Kazakh leader suggested that the CIS leaders, which signed the CIS Charter, should get together and adopt resolutions on the following issues:

1. On the creation of effective authorities of the defence alliance,

2. On principles of ensuring the viability of the economic space,

3. On the creation of the interstate economic committee with appropriate prerogatives,

4. On the working out of principles of relations with the countries, which did not sign the CIS Charter.

In the opinion of Nazarbayev, the next CIS summit could be held late in May or early in April.

The press gives wide coverage to the worsening of Russian- Georgian relations. Russian facilities, situated in the area of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, were bombed and brought under artillery fire. Newspapers publish today a statement of the Russian Defence Ministry, which stressed that "if illegal actions are continued with regard to Russian facilities, Russian troops will put an end to any provocations more resolutely, using all the means at their disposal, and will take measures, including the use of arms, to protect the honour, dignity and life itself of the servicemen and their families."

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA carries an interview with Sergey Shoygu, head of the Russian state Committee for Civil Defence, Emergency Situation and the Elimination of Consequences of Natural Calamities, which was created in 1991. According to Shoygu, civil defence units are no longer subordinated to the Defence Ministry. A conference of East European countries and CIS member states is planned to be held in Moscow next May on trasnational cooperation in the sphere of civil defence and protection against natural calamities.

The newspaper publishes an article about the Tajik national army, which is being created now. The republican Defence Ministry believes that it should be rather small—with a strength of some 20,000, but mobile. Ground troops and air force are planned to be created this year.

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA carries an article by Mikhail Nikolayev, president of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which deals with problems of the Arctic region. He stresses that the Arctic region, which is the native land for many nations and the area where national interests of many countries and regions come to the fore, "calls for a single policy harmonizing those interests, objectives and ways of resolving problems." Nikolayev favours the comprehensive development of the northern sea route—the transport and technological system which includes navigable rivers flowing into the Arctic Ocean.

"Monopolisation of power is disastrous for Russia," Sergey Filatov, head of the president's staff, said in an interview with editor-in-chief of ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI Valeriy Kucher. Filatov analyses in the interview the causes of the worsening of relations between the executive and legislative branches of authority, which the 8th Congress failed to remove. In his opinion, "it is not at all the conflict of personalities. The current situation is not the result of actions of this or that politician. Objective processes are going on, which are determining the developments in this country. The Russian parliament is a replica of the legislative structure of the former USSR, and it is this structure that determines the behaviour of officials. One should be blind not to see that the existing structure of the parliament is wrong. This is one of the root causes of destabilisation ... One should take measures to remove the administrative part of the parliament, to make it a two-chamber institution and, at the same time, to get rid of the Congress. Then people will not get the impression that the leaders speak on behalf of all people's deputies," Filatov believes.

COMMERSANT daily comments on Khasbulatov's tour of CIS member states. According to the newspaper, the chairman of parliament "started the struggle for the Commonwealth." "For President Yeltsin the message to the neighbouring CIS member states was important mostly from the internal political point of view: he wanted to show to Russian citizens that he seeks to consolidate the Commonwealth. At the same time, the tour of CIS member states is needed by Khasbulatov for improving his personal rating, which was rather low and went down even more as a result of the 8th Congress."

Clinton 'Pragmatism' Makes Financial Aid Uncertain

PM1903110193 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Mar 93 First Edition p 3

[Vladimir Mikheyev report: "Bill Clinton Is Devoted to Democratic Russia—Bearing U.S. Interests in Mind"]

[Text] At President Clinton's meeting with U.S. Congressional leaders Tuesday, the topic of financial aid to Russia was pegged to the planned cuts in the military budget. Over the next five years it is planned to cut Pentagon appropriations by more than $100 billion. But the political instability in Russia and Yugoslavia, the president intimated, could force the administration to review its plans.

On an overall level, U.S. President Bill Clinton, who promised to make savings at the Pentagon's expense, cannot be reproached for anything except pragmatism. But the hint that he may refuse to make unconditional budget reductions introduces an element of uncertainty into the use of the "peace dividend" to support the Russian reforms financially, and also uncertainty about the stability of the military-strategic balance that determines the balance of military power between the present and former superpowers.

At first everyone attending the White House meeting "was resolutely in favor of offering aid to Russia in its move toward the establishment of democratic institutions and the free market." The leaders of the two branches of power, the executive and the legislature, were united in their view that support for Yeltsin suits long-term U.S. national interests.

The president's official spokesman George Stephanopoulos admitted that although it is impossible when discussing specific aid to rule out "short-term difficulties in relations with Congress," which is fighting for an effective saving of every treasury cent, the United States can afford to make strategic capital investments in democratic Russia.

G. Stephanopoulos, voicing his President's thoughts, expressed himself forcefully and clearly: "We have spent about $4 trillion on defending the country from past threats, mainly from the USSR. And today we will be able to appropriate several hundred million dollars to assist reforms which will make our lives more secure in the future."

On the one hand, in the opinion of House of Representatives Speaker Tom Foley, the weakening of external threats leaves no doubt that "even after reductions in military potential, our Armed Forces will be stronger than at any time before." On the other hand, Newt Gingrich, Republican deputy leader in the House of Representatives, believes that "the need to guarantee the country's security could force him (i.e. Bill Clinton) to propose a bigger budget than he did before."

U.S. journalists were quick to react to the new nuances in the approach to the problem of military security. Explanations were provided by G. Stephanopoulos, who gave assurances that Clinton is not retreating from his budget outlines, although the possibility of reviewing his earlier intentions cannot be ruled out—"if the world situation changes." As we can see, the White House is skillfully combining traditional pragmatism with the flexibility of the "new thinking."

Article Says U.S. Must Heed Constraints on Yeltsin

PM1903095593 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 19 Mar 93 First Edition p 4

[Stanislav Kondrashov article: "The Congress in Moscow and the Meeting in Vancouver"]

[Text] The outcome of the Eighth Congress of Russian People's Deputies has tactically undermined Boris Yeltsin's meeting with Bill Clinton in Vancouver: After all, the date for holding it, 4 April, was obviously chosen to boost the Russian president politically in the week prior to the referendum, which has now been canceled.

On the other hand, Francois Mitterrand's visit to Moscow as a sign of support for the Russian president came just in time. Although, as expected, the French president refrained from coming out squarely on his side against the Congress' decisions and did not support directly Yeltsin's open call for immediate aid from the West in the struggle against the threat of a "restoration of the communist regime."

The Congress' outcome also forces one to look somewhat differently at the broad strategic thinking behind Western aid for reform in Russia. Washington cannot but take account of the correlation of political forces demonstrated by the Congress, and Moscow would do well to agree the president's position with that of parliament ahead of the Vancouver meeting—for the sake of its effectiveness and to avoid future complications—and, furthermore, to secure an authoritative parliamentary representation at the meeting.

In the light of the quarrel, akin to a break in relations, agreement is a wild fantasy. However, no less wild—and dangerous—a fantasy would be the use of Western aid as an instrument in the battle between the two branches of power, with an easily predicted outcome both for the recipients and the providers if, by gambling on one side, they add fuel to the fire of internal Russian conflict. Is this what is being sought by the West in general, and Clinton in particular? How can it be, if his main aim, like that of Bush, is the political stability of a new partner in complete turmoil but nevertheless in possession of 10,000 nuclear weapons?

After the Congress, Clinton again confirmed that he will do everything possible to support political and economic reform in Russia, and a White House spokesman described Yeltsin as "the best hope for reform." That

same spokesman expressed Clinton's hope that the "inconsistencies between the Russian president and the Russian parliament will be resolved via methods which do not contradict reform," and "in a peaceful way."

The "Russian question" is a new question for the new American President. But what strikes those for whom this is not a new question is the regurgitated elements of the American approach, according it a partly tragicomic character. Especially when you compare the run-up and progress of the Congress which has just ended to last April, when the Sixth Congress took place.

At that time, too, we heard roughly the very same words about the "threat to reform" from the "conservatives," and about the need to urgently support Boris Yeltsin as the main, if not only, guarantor of Russia's movement toward democracy and the West.

At that time, too, warnings were heard about the "inadequacy" of the political reaction to events in Russia and of economic aid to that country. Moreover, as now, the role of the most prominent Cassandra—predicting misfortune and calling for action—was assumed by none other than the most venerable and battle-scarrred Richard Nixon, who has been politically buried and resurrected on numerous occasions. Now he has made Russia's fate the subject of his unremitting concerns and at the same time, it seems, an indispensable means of prolonging his own public career.

Again, one year ago there were the very same conversations, with their momentous implications, about the Russian president's participation in the July meeting of G-7 heads in Munich, just as today these conversations are about participating in the July meeting in Tokyo, while two years ago it was all about Mikhail Gorbachev's participation in the July meeting in London. Admittedly, consultations with the "Big Seven" on assisting reform in Russia may now be switched to April, as Mitterrand proposed.

And finally, at that time, prior to the Sixth Congress, hastening to support the reformist Yeltsin-Gaydar team, President Bush and IMF leader Camdessus announced an "aid package" for Russia. This time too, on the very eve of the Eighth Congress, doing his bit in the struggle against the Russian "conservatives," President Clinton and Secretary of State Christopher also concocted a "package," or something resembling a "package," which will be discussed at the upcoming American-Russian summit.

But... Now the most important element begins—not the similarities, but the differences in the situation. The newly-formulated "package" is slim by comparison with the old one, and, meanwhile, even last year's $24 billion has disappeared without trace in the Russian expanses. Who has seen this money? The new package so far reveals a mere $300 million from America—in addition to the $400 million promised earlier. They are also talking, vaguely so far, about whether to grant Russia indulgences on the arms trade markets and use American funds to pay "social aid" to the impoverished Russians: This project is comparatively cheap—given the current dollar-ruble exchange rate.

In general, the biggest help would be to defer payments on Russia's foreign debts for several years, but this too merely stresses the difference in principle between the situation last April and this March: The expectation of manna from the Western heaven has ceased to be a factor in "transitional" Russian life. One year ago, even the "shock therapy" methods were seen as a form of this manna. Welcoming the IMF's statement regarding the $24-billion "package," Yegor Gaydar declared at the Sixth Congress that the West had responded worthily to the "challenge of the era," and that a salvational "barrage" of Western private investment would soon pour into the Russian economy. This prediction, like many others, did not come true. At the Eighth Congress, new Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin condemned both a "simple return to the past" and the borrowing of "ostensibly simple foreign models and ideas." His call was as follows: to gear ourselves to "our own historical path and our own Russian future," and also to the people's wisdom—Russia's ills cannot be cured by foreign doctors.

There is no point in simplifying the state of affairs and causing a head-on confrontation between the followers of the Chicago monetarist school and the Orenburg oil and gas school [reference to Chernormyrdin career background], but here is another quotation: "In the immediate future, the rest of the world can do little to influence the development of the Russian crisis." This comes from a recent secret cable to Washington from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Somehow, the CBS Television Company got hold of it and published it. The evaluation, however, is no longer original, it may even be too general, but it is true, and what is more it is now firmly entrenched in the minds of most Russians. And it also calls for realism on the part of those in the West who would like to try yet again to respond worthily to the "challenge of the era."

But for us, who have lost all faith in the miraculous qualities of Western aid, it is important not to succumb to the sin of nihilism, outrightly denying the utility of this aid. In turn, it would also be quite desirable to spare it from black-and-white, ideologized, party hues.

Again, the new administration in Washington is faced with a question of fundamental importance which the Bush administration failed to answer plainly. What, then, is Western aid for the Russian reform, and what, in this connection, is the Russian reformist movement? Are we talking about aid to Starovoytova as opposed to Baburin, or to Father Gleb Yakunin as opposed to, say, Volskiy? Is it aid to Yeltsin rather than Khasbulatov, who, incidentally, caustically noted last April that "the United States is only to be pitied if its policy toward Russia is built on a pillar bearing only the name of Gaydar"?

Is it aid for the president against the Congress? In which case most of the Congress, having deprived the president of his extraordinary powers and condemned "shock therapy" as the only possible reform method, will be categorized as counterreformists. Which, in fact, is generally what is happening in the greater part of the Western press, which automatically borrows evaluations from our radical democrats so as to subsequently rehash them and present them as their own to the Russian audience.

So you can see, there is an infinite number of variations on one and the same question. Is this aid serving to further divide or to unify Russian society? In today's conditions, of course, it is easier to divide than to unite—it is possible to push the country into an abyss or nudge it into civil war, but what then will happen to the remnants of political stability in Russia, and to the aforementioned 10,000 nuclear weapons which continue to link the two countries to the bitter end?

Before the Eighth Congress, President Clinton came out emphatically on the side of President Yeltsin, declaring him to be, in essence, the very incarnation of democracy and reform in Russia. He gambled, and he lost. Tactically, his behavior was understandable, but it was not vindicated, proving that America can indeed "do little to influence the development of the Russian crisis." What will America's position be now after the Eighth Congress and before Vancouver?

For the pragmatic Americans, their own interests always come before the fate of one or other foreign partner. Gorbachev's experience shows how quickly they can "drop" their political friends. Some American experts believe that Bush had already succeeded in leaving Yeltsin "exposed" by forcing too many concessions out of him and, to all intents and purposes, preventing his moving toward the Russian political center. Clinton would do well to rectify this error.

As for the Yeltsin team, as it has already been pointed out, a coalition approach would be preferable to a confrontational approach during the internal Russian preparations for Vancouver.

Zorkin Returns Early From U.S. Visit

LD1803102193 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1817 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksandr Krasulin]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—Chairman of the Russian Constitutional Court Valeriy Zorkin has completed an official part of his visit to the United States on Thursday and decided to return to Moscow ahead of schedule since he has many matters to attend to in court, ITAR-TASS learned from the press service of the Constitutional Court.

During the visit to the United States Zorkin met U.S. President Bill Clinton, the U.S. vice president, chairman of the U.S. Supreme Court and a number of senators. Zorkin delivered a speech at a conference of Supreme Court judges and held talks with U.S. lawyers.

Zorkin noted that the United States was greatly concerned about the situation in Russia and was attempting to analyse the difficult situation and determine its policy towards Russia.

"The U.S. is afraid of a collapse and an unconstitutional way out of the crisis no less than Russia does," Zorkin said.

Zorkin told Clinton that, in his opinion, the Russian president had not lost, but won the Congress of Russian People's Deputies since, as a result, Yeltsin gained a unique, and perhaps the last chance to become a leader of national accord and a guarantor of the constitutional stability in the Russian Federation, since a wide front of centrist forces is prepared to give him support.

Envoy to Washington Evaluates Bilateral Relations

MK1803094893 Moscow MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI in Russian No. 12, 21 Mar 93 p A7 (Signed to Press 16 Mar 93)

[Article by Vladimir Lukin, Russian ambassador to the United States, under "Three Authors" rubric: "Clinton and Russia: New Twist"]

[Text] The joint initiative of Presidents Clinton and Mitterrand to hold an early meeting of G-7 leaders on questions concerning aid to Russia once again shows how concerned the West and the United States are over the acuteness of the political struggle now going on in Russia. This acuteness does not foster the appearance of clarity in Western politicians and businessmen regarding their own actions. Unfortunately, after the Congress nothing has changed for the better from the viewpoint of the perception of our country.

On the other hand, the West is starting to get used to the fact that we are learning to solve our political crises within the framework of a civilized, peaceful, and democratic process. When Clinton states that he continues to support the democratic reforms in Russia and identifies them with President Yeltsin, he is at the same time drawing attention to the fact that changes in democratic parliamentary forms are taking place in our country. This dual approach is revealing.

The extent to which our affairs with Western countries progress depends above all on whether we will be able to forge forms of economic cooperation with them that they understand. Up to now we have been perceived as a "black hole" and an evil infinity that is irrational and unpredictable—for example, when a country that has always been famous for punctually meeting its debt commitments ceases to pay off grain credits and furthermore does so without any prior explanations. Naturally, there are situations when for certain reasons a state

cannot pay off loans. But a respectable state always gives advance warning of this. In our case this did not happen. Such instances also lead to a loss of confidence in other spheres of economic cooperation. This also has political repercussions. If economic behavior is unpredictable, what guarantee is there that politics will be predictable? In this context the granting of additional powers to our government inspires certain hopes in U.S. businessmen.

But, naturally, what most worries the West is how our political vortexes will affect the direction of economic reform as a whole. After all, it is understood that no economy is possible without a more or less balanced budget. People over there are now asking: To what extent will what occurred at the Congress affect economic policy? Will new money flow into the economy as an indulgence to various strata of the population, thereby undermining the budget?

Questions are also being asked about foreign policy problems. The Americans have accumulated a certain force of inertia—in the sense that in the past year they have had Russia's automatic support in most of their foreign policy actions, which were by no means always ideal. When certain differences recently arose between Russia and the United States on a number of specific tactical questions, for example on a settlement in Yugoslavia or regarding arms trading, this caused increased excitability there.

It would therefore be good if the United States and the West as a whole finally realized that Russia is not a timid village idiot who hangs on his older brother's words, but a great country, albeit one that is in a difficult position. Like every member of the world community, we will take our share of responsibility both for the community as a whole and for the accepted rules of the game within it. But at the same time, like every member of the community, we have our own national interests and intend to defend them in a civilized fashion.

What can Russia expect from the Clinton-Mitterrand initiative? I think that there are two sides here. When Clinton was still only a presidential candidate he came out in favor of giving considerable assistance to develop our democracy, including material assistance, although this was clearly unpopular in America. He criticized the previous administration for not giving enough assistance of this kind. By all accounts the new President and his inner circle clearly understand that Russia and its democratic development and advance toward the market are America's main priority.

The other side of the issue is no less important. The public's mood is of great importance to any U.S. administration. Until recently America was anxious about events in Yugoslavia, and the Yugoslav factor took center stage in its foreign policy. But all last week U.S. television screens were taken up with coverage of Russia. The dramatic events at the Congress and the even more dramatic mass media commentaries have once again drawn the public's attention to Russia. This coincided with a real U.S. national interest. Will this be for a long time? We shall see.

At any rate, President Clinton can use this to convince the U.S. public of the need to pay fresh attention to Russia and forge real cooperation with it.

Churkin Visits U.S. for Bosnia Negotiations

OW1903121293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1149 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaliy Churkin flew to New York on Friday [19 March] to serve as the Russian president's special representative at the latest round of negotiations on the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Interfax was informed today by the Russian foreign ministry.

In a conversation with an Interfax correspondent, a high-ranking official at the foreign ministry expressed the hope that the current round of negotiations in New York would result in the signing of the "Vance-Owen plan" for settling the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. So far, two of the conflicting sides - the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian Muslims - have refused to sign the agreement, insisting on making alterations in the "map" of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, according to the Vance-Owen plan, is to be divided into ten semi-autonomous provinces.

According to the diplomat, both the Bosnian Serbs and those in Belgrade know Russia's position and "would like to believe that it will be taken into account in the final decision."

Urges UN-Controlled Peacekeeping

LD1803205393 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1900 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] The Russian deputy foreign minister, Vitaliy Churkin, has declared that the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia should be fully controlled by the United Nations. In an interview for MOSCOW NEWS he said that after the adoption of the Vance-Owen plan which will hopefully (?happen), the very complicated stage of carrying it out will come. Churkin said it would be the biggest peacekeeping operation in human history, implying the presence of 40-50,000 UN peacekeepers in Bosnia.

Moscow Accepts Estonian Consulate in St. Petersburg

PM1903110993 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Mar 93 First Edition p 7

["Official" section report under the general headline: "Agreements, Directives, Decrees..."]

[Text] The Russian Government has made arrangements to accept the proposal of the Foreign Ministry to open a General Consulate of the Estonian Republic in St. Petersburg with a consular district including St. Petersburg and Leningrad and Pskov Oblasts, which has been coordinated with the interested ministries, departments, and executive organs of the relevant areas of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has been instructed to formalize the indicated agreement with the Estonian side in appropriate documents envisaging the right of the Russian Federation to open a consular mission on the territory of the Republic of Estonia in the future on a reciprocal basis.

Talks With Latvia Reopen Despite Impasse on Troops

MK1803140493 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 2

[Dmitriy Zhdannikov report under "Talks" rubric: "Moscow- Riga: Another Round. Citizenship Question Will Not Be Discussed"]

[Text] Another round of Russian-Latvian talks has opened in Moscow.

The Russian delegation is headed by Sergey Zotov, ambassador for special assignments, and the Latvian by State Minister Janis Dinevics. Matters under discussion relate to social safety nets for servicemen, retired military men, and civilian personnel (workers and clerks at military enterprises of the former Soviet Army). The draft documents were coordinated earlier at the level of expert groups from the two states.

The problem of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Latvia has effectively reached an impasse. The Latvian delegation declined to include it in the list of draft documents even at the expert groups level.

With regard to the question of citizenship, according to the Russian side its consideration can be put off because the Latvian legislation now completely rules out the republic's citizenship for the military.

Draft agreements "On Aspects of the Operation of Air Transport in the Airspace of the Latvian Republic" and "On Aspects of the Regime of Entry Into Latvian Ports by Russian Ships," which had been discussed previously at the level of expert groups, were also drawn up.

The list of draft documents also includes a treaty on the use of 17 military enterprises on Latvian territory. Its purpose is to provide a basis for agreement between the two sides on the avoidance of unilateral changes in the status of military facilities. In this draft the Russian side insists on the conversion of the enterprises and the creation of Russian-Latvian joint ventures on the basis of the facilities. It is expected that a package of social-humanitarian issues related to cooperation in education, including university studies, and migration will also be discussed at the Latvian-Russian interstate talks.

Evolution of Russian Stance on Baltics Viewed

PM1903120393 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 3

[Valeriy Gromak report under "Events and Commentaries" rubric: "We Have Interests in Baltic. This Means We Must Ensure Worthy Naval Presence There"]

[Text] Kaliningrad—Both the Kaliningrad press and the mass media of the Baltic states are now actively commenting on the results of Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev's trip to Kaliningrad Oblast and Lithuania ahead of the session of the Council of Baltic Sea States in Helsinki. Observers agree that Russia is beginning to sustain quite a clear-cut line on the Baltic question.

It is possible to agree with this conclusion. At meetings with Andrey Kozyrev in Baltiysk, Baltic Fleet officers voiced concern over the future fate of the fleet, which, if "special circumstances arise," could be locked in Kaliningrad Oblast. The minister remarked in this regard that naval forces can scare people away from our coasts, but that they can also act as an attraction by ensuring stability and the state's prestige. "So let us defend our real interests," Kozyrev urged.

Russia does have interests—both economic and political—in the Baltic. Therefore our worthy naval presence in the region is needed. The minister went on to emphasize that we sternly warn of the consequences those who make territorial claims on Russia and who flout human rights, including the rights of the Russian-speaking population.

Even the itinerary of Andrey Kozyrev's trip confirms this position. Russia thereby demonstrates, as it were, that at present it is prepared to have priority relations in the Baltic precisely with Lithuania. Here, as distinct from neighboring Latvia and Estonia, the Russian-speaking population has been granted the right of citizenship. At the meetings in Vilnius it was decided to resume the Russian-Lithuanian talks that were broken off in the fall, particularly on our troops. Of course, there are plenty of problems here as well. The Lithuanians have so far avoided signing agreements on the withdrawal of Russian troops and on social guarantees for servicemen and pensioners of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense. Without these agreements it is impossible to implement the troop withdrawal schedule. With the accession to power of the "Algirdas Brazauskas team," it will evidently be possible to remove this kind of obstacle.

It is characteristic that much of what Andrey Kozyrev said in Baltiysk really was reflected in his speech at the session of the Council of Baltic Sea States. In particular, he called for attention to be paid to the infringement of the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia and Estonia. The minister also proposed that the council

set up a special fund to finance the Russian troop withdrawal. All this confirms the opinion of many observers who have followed the trip by the head of our foreign policy department that on the Baltic question Russia is starting to display consistency and persistence based on its own interests.

Officials Comment on Situation in Georgia

'Georgian' Su-25's Bomb Abkhazia

OW1803174293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1723 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Georgian Su-25 aircraft, which bear the Russian emblem, are bombing Sukhumi and Georgian-populated areas of Abkhazia. This statement was made in front of journalists Thursday [by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev on board the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov at dock in Severomorsk. Grachev called Tbilisi's claims that Sukhumi and other populated areas of Abkhazia were being bombed by Russian aircraft "lies and provocation".

The Russian Defense Ministry possessed reliable information that the Georgian Air Force included 7 Su-25 fighters which were based near the aircraft workshop in Tbilisi, Grachev said. The aircraft had been painted in the livery and bore the emblem of the Russian Air Force, including the five-pointed star. The fighters, the Russian minister pointed out, were "both making manoeuvres and directly participating in the bombardment of built up areas which it was subsequently claimed were subjected to bombing raids by Russian aircraft."

Grachev commented that a genuine war was being waged in Georgia against the republic's own people. "When major losses are incurred an enemy is sought to account for these losses," Grachev said. "This enemy is, as a rule, the Russian Armed Forces."

The minister once again stressed that Russian troops were not intervening on the Georgian-Abkhazian front.

He announced that commencing March 13 Georgian aviation had delivered 14 raids to the military laboratory in Eshery and a military rest home near Sukhumi. The most atrocious raid was carried out on March 17, killing five personnel at the rest home and wounding another 17, including a serviceman from a separate airborne division, Grachev said.

Pavel Grachev declared that he had given the troops "the even tougher mission of fighting aggression from Georgian detachments."

Defense Ministry Warns Georgia

PM1903113393 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 1

[Russian Defense Ministry Press Center report: "Russian Defense Ministry Statement"]

[Text] In connection with the stepping up of the hostilities between Georgia and Abkhazia, the situation around the Russian installations located in the conflict zone has deteriorated again.

On 17 March the seismic laboratory and military sanatorium of the Russian Defense Ministry in Esheri and Sukhumi came under air and artillery attack which left five civilian personnel dead and eight injured. The Georgian side has repeatedly stated that such actions are intolerable but, as is evident, such statements by the Georgian military command are not being observed in practice. It is quite obvious that behind these provocative acts by the Georgian side there is a desire to draw the Russian Army into the armed conflict and play the army card, thereby aggravating as far as possible the already quite difficult relations between Russia and Georgia.

In connection with this development of events, the Russian Defense Ministry delivers a firm protest to the Georgian side and reaffirms that the Russian troops are not taking part in the conflict and are observing and will continue to observe strict neutrality in the future.

The Russian Defense Ministry also states that if the unlawful actions against Russian installations continue, the Russian troops will use all the means at their disposal to more resolutely thwart all acts of provocation and take measures, including armed measures, to protect the honor, dignity, and the very lives of servicemen and members of their families. Meanwhile the Georgian side bears full responsibility for the acts of provocation.

At the same time no one should be in any doubt that the Russian Defense Ministry is always ready to resolve all disputed problems and questions by civilized, peaceful means and by talks.

Bilateral Talks To Continue

OW1803142393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1348 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Report by diplomatic correspondents Andrey Borodin, Dmitriy Voskoboynikov, and Igor Porshnev; from the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Despite rather tough statements from Georgia and unsubstantiated charges addressed to Russia, the Russo-Georgian talks in Moscow are going on, the RF [Russian Federation] foreign ministry reported to Interfax on Thursday [18 March]. On Wednesday, the chief Georgian delegate Mikhail Ukleba, the first deputy

foreign minister of the republic, declared that the negotiations "were in deadlock" through the fault of Moscow, which is trying to protract them "endlessly".

Mr. Ukleba also read out a note from Georgia's foreign ministry, in which the Russian troops in Abkhazia are accused of an "armed aggression" against Georgia.

On the same day the RF foreign ministry came up with a reply, which refutes the charge of Russia's involvement in the Georgian- Abkhaz conflict. The statement underlines that "not a single Russian army unit or a single troop serving in the Russian army now takes part in events in Abkhazia".

The position of the Russian government toward the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is in strict neutrality and in every possible assistance to settle it, the document notes.

Russian Troops Unhappy With Policy

LD1803181693 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0830 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] As has been learned from individuals close to military circles of the Russian troops stationed in Georgia, part of the Russian servicemen and staff of the special services are expressing dissatisfaction with the policy being conducted by Russian reactionary forces with regard to Georgia. From the information received it is obvious that for many years now the majority of them have been serving and living in our republic and have friendly ties and sometimes relatives among the Georgian population. They assess the situation that has been created objectively. Drawing on the abovementioned, according to information from the same sources, the Russian leadership has expressed a lack of confidence in the majority of servicemen and special services staff who are in Georgia.

Official: Russia Ready for Talks

LD1803160293

[Editorial Report] Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian at 1320 GMT on 18 March broadcasts a 3-minute report on an interview with V. Chirvin, head of the Russian Ministry of Defense press center, in which, in reply to a question about the Georgian side's repeated requests to hold talks, even at the summit level, Chervin says that "the Ministry of Defense is ready, at any time, to tackle the complex problems and questions that arise as far as the Georgian side is concerned, but only by civilized and peaceful methods, by way of talks—please, at any time."

Kazakh President Backs Yeltsin on CIS Reforms

LD1803131393 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1200 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan sent a telegram today to President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation. It says:

Much esteemed Boris Nikolayevich. I support your general position on strengthening the Commonwealth and deepening the economic reforms and democratic changes as expressed in your address and repeatedly defended by Kazakhstan and Russia.

Taking account of the traditional aspirations of the peoples of our state to preserve and develop all-round cooperation, together to emerge from the economic crisis and to restore broken ties, I am proposing to the heads of state and government in the Commonwealth who have signed the CIS Charter that we assemble to make specific decisions on the following issues:

1. On setting up clearly functioning bodies in a defense alliance in accordance with the collective security treaty.

2. On the principles of ensuring a viable economic space, a single supranational currency, free trade, and the establishment of a customs union.

3. On forming an interstate economic committee to which the states supporting this decision would delegate the necessary powers.

[No number as heard] On drawing up principles for relations with states which are not signatories to the CIS Charter.

In Nazarbayev's opinion, a meeting could be held to discuss these issues at the end of March or the beginning of April in Moscow or another city. It would be advisable to entrust the preparation of draft documentation for the summit meeting to the heads of government.

The president of Kazakhstan has sent similar telegrams to the heads of states which are signatories to the CIS Charter.

Azeri Mission Holds Roundtable on Terrorism

LD1803141993 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1401 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Yuriy Vdovin]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—"We are sure that it is not the Armenian people but other hostile forces that commit terrorist acts in Azerbaijan," head of the Azeri President Press Service Arif Aliyev said at a round table held by the Azeri mission in Moscow on Thursday.

According to mission representatives, the round table was devoted to "terrorism as a factor of destabilisation in Transcaucasian states and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States".

The need to discuss these problems was prompted by more frequent terrorist acts committed over the recent past, Aliyev continued. He noted that Azerbaijan made a statement on this issue.

The statement calls on the heads of state and government as well as the public "to concert their efforts and start immediate consultations to control terrorism".

"Otherwise," Aliyev said, "terrorist groups may turn into a threat to the entire world in future."

Ukraine Rejects Proposals on Natural Gas Prices

LD1903101693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0937 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS]

[Text] Moscow March 19 TASS—The regular round of Russo- Ukrainian talks on problems concerning economic interrelations, which was held in Moscow, ended. The problem of price of natural gas supplies from Russia to Ukraine was considered during this round.

Taking into consideration the present economic situation in Ukraine, the Russian side did not insist on a switch over to payment for gas in hard currency. Russia has proposed to supply gas at the rate of 27.6 thousand roubles per 1000 cubic metres under the condition that the tariff in force, for the transportation of gas through the Ukrainian territory to Europe, will be maintained.

A compromise version was also considered, according to which gas will be sold at the rate of 15.6 thousand roubles per 1000 cubic metres until April 30, 1993, provided by this date modes of price difference compensation are determined and payment relations for gas supply are regulated.

Ukraine has rejected these proposals, but talks will be continued. It should be remembered that notwithstanding the unresolved issue of gas price and delay in payments, gas supply to Ukraine has not been stopped.

Government Approves Trade Agreements With CIS States

PM1803165593 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Mar 93 First Edition p 7

["Official" section report under general headline: "Agreements, Directives, Decrees..."]

[Text] The Russian Federation Government has decreed approval of: The agreement between the Russian Federation Government and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on free trade dated 13 November 1992; the agreement between the Russian Federation Government and the Turkmenistan Government on free trade dated 11 November 1992; the agreement on trade relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 13 November 1992.

DPRK on Alert During U.S.-ROK Military Maneuvers

SK1803143693 Moscow Radio Moscow in Korean 1200 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] The streets of Pyongyang were empty early this morning. It seemed that the transportation network was paralyzed. Enterprises were closed. Then an air raid drill began in Pyongyang, the capital of the DPRK. The citizens remained in shelters for over an hour and a half.

The DPRK is in a state of semi-war because of the resumption of the ROK-U.S. Team Spirit joint military exercise, which began on 8 March. Pyongyang is saying that this is a preliminary aggressive exercise aimed at North Korea. It is also saying that this military exercise can change into a Korean war of aggression at any time.

Pyongyang [words indistinct]. The city is living in pitch black darkness.

'Tense' DPRK-ROK Ties Viewed

LD1803152093 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1210 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Commentary by Yuriy Solton]

[Text] One of the leading American congressmen speaking to reporters has described North Korea, which on the 12th [March] announced its decision to withdraw from the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty, as a major threat to his country's security. The United States, John Martin said, should be ready for unilateral action if necessary, namely to strike at North Korea's nuclear facilities using the latest weapons. And here is a commentary by Yuriy Solton, and this is what he writes:

The congressman's statement can be considered his personal position. At the same time there is no doubt that it reflects the views of a certain group of bellicose American politicians. The inflammatory character of the statement itself is also obvious.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula remains tense. The North Korean Army of more than 1,000,000 strong and the South Korean Army of 640,000 people have been alerted. Pyongyang has called on the people to get ready for war. (?And) similar calls, although in subdued terms, are being made in Seoul. And still certain signs of relaxation are visible.

The American-South Korean military exercises, the Team Spirit series, a source of special nervousness in Pyongyang, ended on Thursday. Despite certain assertions the Americans don't leave any additional troops or military equipment in South Korea after such exercises.

Diplomats are active. In Vienna representatives of Britain, the United States and Russia are holding consultations. The meetings have been initiated by Moscow. Beijing has joined the efforts to ease tensions on the peninsula. The International Atomic Energy Agency is discussing the problem at an emergency session.

For that matter the term of North Korea's obligations before the agency has not yet expired. So Pyongyang still has time to think it over to refute by concrete deeds the charge that it wants to build a nuclear weapon.

And so the question is, is there any need to continue building up tensions in such conditions?

Russians Polled on Saddam Husayn Government

OW1903092893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0650 GMT 19 Mar 93

[From "Viewpoint Number 9"; materials prepared by the Public Opinion Foundation—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Should We Copy Saddam Husayn's Regime? [subhead]

This time it seems rather unusual that this type of question was selected by the Foundation for a sociological analysis. 1,060 citizens of the Russian Federation were asked if it was their wish to have the same political system in Russia as it was in Iraq. Most likely the question was phrased that way because the Soviet Union was always backing up the development of special privileged relations with the regime of Saddam Husayn on the basis of the so- called Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation. In the Middle East area Iraq was the largest trading partner of the USSR, a primary consumer of Soviet arms.

Now the leadership of Russia officially denounced the actions of Iraq in the course of the well-known events in the Persian Gulf zone and joined the international sanctions. And yet some rather influential procommunist and "patriotic" movements of the RF [Russian Federation] express their complete solidarity with the present leadership of Iraq. And the experts believe that the number of Saddam Husayn's advocates in Russia is rather great.

The polling was a clear sign that only 10

of the Russians would have liked to see Russia operating in the same political conditions as those in Iraq. 50

of respondents went against the "Iraqi model" and 40

could not answer the question. Commentary From the Public Opinion Foundation: [subhead]

When appraising these data, one should, of course, take into account the hypothetical nature of the question asked. To begin with, the differences of cultural and political nature are too great between Iraq and Russia to be able to talk seriously about Russia's copying this kind of Arab political experience. Rather, as this case is, the concept of Iraq's political arrangement is used here as a kind of metaphor to describe a purely dictatorial, militarized regime.

However, even when trying to find out the views of the respondents with the aid of this metaphor, the authors of this question, most probably, overvalued the level of public knowledge on the intricacies of the operation of the Iraqi political system. This may well be the reason that accounts for a high percentage of those who found it difficult to answer the question. And you can back this up with the fact that most of the respondents who found it difficult to give an answer are those among the unemployed, housewives and pensioners.

A rather interesting is the social image of those who opposes the system in the most categorical way. [sentence as received] Antitotalitarian sentiments were shared, first of all, by the managers of state enterprises, army officers and employees of the legislative bodies, as well as by the people with college and university education and the workers. It is of interest to note that the maximum sympathies that were given to the regime of cruel power came from businessmen.

Press Comments on Results of Mitterrand Visit

Mitterrand, Yeltsin Benefit

MK1803114493 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 1

[Dmitriy Gornostayev commentary under the rubric "Diplomacy": "'Democratic States Should Help Russia on the Road of Reforms,' French President Francois Mitterrand Believes"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The results of French President Francois Mitterrand's visit to Moscow can probably be assessed as positive. Both men must have accomplished what they intended. As regards Mitterrand, this visit gave him an opportunity, by drawing the French people's attention to foreign policy, to score additional points for his party before the first round of parliamentary elections Sunday. The other task consisted in getting a feel for the real situation in Russia, and in reaching a diagnosis which could be presented during the meeting with the heads of G-7. As for Yeltsin, he probably wanted, first, to demonstrate to his opponents in parliament his weight in the international arena and, second—and perhaps most importantly—to let the French president examine the sick man in order to be able later to call an "ambulance" in the shape of G-7.

Visit Sent 'Important' Signal

PM1803161193 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 3

[Mikhail Pogorelyy report: "Will the West Help Russia?"]

[Text] French President Francois Mitterrand's brief official visit to Russia 16 March was an important and timely signal, Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin declared at the news conference at the close of the talks, a signal that France and with it a number of other Western states support the reformist forces in our country and are deeply interested in the triumph of democracy in Russia and the stabilitzation of its political and economic position.

At the same time, both politicians acknowledged that as yet there is no absolute unity of views among the Western powers and G-7 members on the problem of

providing large-scale aid, first and foremost in the sphere of the economy and finance. While Germany adopts stances similar to those of France, Japan continues to occupy a special position. But it is Tokyo which will host the heads of state and government of the world's seven most industrially developed countries in June-July this year. We cannot wait until then, Yeltsin declared categorically: By then it may already be too late.

He explained this thought in greater detail. Recent events, the president said, and in particular the Eighth Congress, have shown the whole world the attempts at "revenge by conservative forces" and attempts to "restore the communist regime of the soviets," have led to a "deepening of the constitutional crisis in Russia," and have inflicted tremendous "damage on the Russian Federation's state system." This situation, Boris Yeltsin stressed, has alarmed the leaders of the major powers, and it is unlikely that they will delay long in settling urgent, pivotal questions which in actual fact could be resolved in a few weeks, or months at most. By way of an example he cited the problem of the outstanding question of rescheduling payments on the USSR's foreign debts—which this year alone total around $2.5 billion.

On the other hand, serious collaboration will not only help us to strengthen our economy, continue the reforms, and improve Russians' material position as early as by the end of this year, the president stressed; it will also be beneficial to our partners. For instance, 33 agreements have been concluded with France recently on cooperation in various spheres—economic and financial ties, the development of science and technology, space exploration, and so on. Or take another aspect—the destruction of nuclear weapons. This is a noble but technically very difficult task, Boris Yeltsin noted. France, on its own initiative, decided to give Russia as much help as it could in this matter. But there is still a great deal of work to do in destroying chemical weapons, which have been stockpiled in such quantities that their reserves exceed the requirements of all countries of the world several times over, Yeltsin added.

The president also gave a positive evaluation to another French initiative. A few days ago during a meeting with the U.S. President, Mitterrand, the patriarch of European politics, suggested to Clinton organizing a working meeting of G-7 leaders straight after the Yeltsin-Clinton talks in Vancouver—that is, much earlier than the planned meeting in Tokyo. It appears that Francois Mitterrand managed to convince his American colleague of the need for such a meeting, and, most importantly, of the need to adopt immediate emergency measures to organize international aid to Russia and support its progress along the democratic road of development. Besides, the concept of "aid" under President Yeltsin's definition would imply above all weighty, direct investment in the Russian economy and help in developing our energy, transport, and communications network and in solving the severe social problems, particularly those linked with health.

Other areas of international cooperation between Russia and France were also discussed during the talks between the two leaders. Of course, they include the prospects for an end to the Yugoslav conflict, which both sides are playing a noticeable role in settling. Our countries' positions, President Mitterrand noted, seem to be very close. Various aspects of the Karabakh crisis were also examined.

Link to French Domestic Concerns

PM1803170193 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Mar 93 Single Edition p 15

[Commentary by "international journalist" Viktor Onuchko: "Lightning Visit by the Patriarch. French President Holds Talks in Moscow"]

[Text] Francois Mitterrand, undoubtedly one of the most brilliant politicians of postwar Europe, has again visited Russia.

The author of these lines had occasion to observe Mitterrand in Paris during the last official visit to France by the USSR president and the first by the Russian president. On the former occasion he demonstrated in both look and tone respect for a great power, although at the same time he was trying his utmost not to notice Gorbachev's inordinate grandiloquence. On the latter, Mitterrand expressed his respect for the new Russia, although it was well known that his attitude to the collapse of the Soviet Union was by no means unequivocal.

But can a respectful attitude to our country alone explain the fact that the very elderly and not entirely healthy French president, on the eve of parliamentary elections that evidently promise him no good, flew to Moscow and talked of aid for Russia? Even to the nonspecialist, it is clear that serious problems are not resolved during such lightning visits.

The increasingly difficult position on the French political stage of Mitterrand and the Socialist Party, which he revived, should not be discounted. The president is an experienced tactician and evidently hopes to demonstrate to supporters and rivals alike by his series of foreign excursions to difficult regions that he is full of strength and energy and capable of resolving difficult international tasks, such as, say, expediting the convening of an extraordinary meeting of the "G-7" countries to discuss the possibilities of economic aid for Russia.

However, I am also convinced of the sincerity of Mitterrand's intentions to aid Russia. Such a deep politician cannot help but realize that, in aiding us, he will thereby be helping France also. This is where the logic lies of his remarks at the news conference in the Kremlin concerning the problems of Russia's life today, which affect the whole of Europe. Francois Mitterrand is able to see a long way ahead, and his fears that in Yugoslavia's wake

an impoverished and explosive Russia will lie round Europe's neck are influenced above all by raison d'etat.

And it was to find out how and whom to help that he came straight after the Congress of People's Deputies, to take a look at his Russian colleague, to feel his mood and the atmosphere in Moscow. One can only guess what conclusions Mitterrand will draw for himself and his "G-7" partners.

The claim that it is no bad thing to aid us today is not a new discovery. And of course, our president is right when he calls on the West for direct investments in the Russian economy. But Western entrepreneurs are held back—and the further they get, the more so—by the barriers of our internal feuds and the license of our fully unfettered bureaucracy, which has become more terrible in Russia than any racketeering.

Will the Kremlin's wise men convince the patriarch of European policy that we will manage to overcome this? At the moment we are unable to penetrate the secrecy of the presidents' confidential conversation.

Finnish Defense Minister Ends Visit to St. Petersburg

LD1803222993 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1534 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksey Zavinovskiy]

[Text] St. Petersburg, 18 Mar—Finnish Defense Minister Elisabeth Rehn today arrived in St. Petersburg on a short working visit. Before this she visited a Leningrad military district unit. An official meeting was held with the commander of the district's troops, Colonel General Sergey Seleznev. Elisabeth Rehn stressed that her visit was aimed at supporting traditional good-neighborly contacts. "I have received thorough information on questions which interest me and can assure the population of Finland as regards what is going on on the other side of the border," she said in an interview with an ITAR-TASS correspondent. "We are also prepared to give information about our defense forces and the situation along our borders." The Finnish defense minister left for home today.

Japan Said Divided Over G-7 Special Meeting

OW1803142293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1348 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Report by diplomatic correspondents A. Borodin, D. Voshkkoboinikov, and I. Porshnev; from the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature— Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] One gets the impression that the Japanese cannot agree among themselves on an official position on the special meeting of G-7 finance and foreign ministers regarding aid to reform in Russia. The statement was made by a high-ranking Russian foreign ministry official during an interview with Interfax.

In his opinion, if everything depended upon Japan, Tokyo would obviously prefer for there to be no special G-7 meeting at all. The Japanese, however, have to consider the positions of their partners. This is particularly the case with France, whose president Francois Mitterrand said during his Tuesday [16 March] visit to Moscow that the West intended to render assistance to the democratic transformations going on in Russia. He also called for the holding of a special G-7 meeting "even before Tokyo—in April." The foreign ministry official noted that the Japanese, as hosts of the July summit in Tokyo, would be holding consultations on the time and place for the special "ministerial" meeting of the G-7. "Nothing is clear on these questions currently," he said, admitting that in addition to Tokyo, the special meeting may also be held in Vancouver.

Commentary Views Meeting's Prospects

LD1803142893 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1210 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Commentary by Anatoliy Potapov; read by announcer]

[Text] In our commentary Anatoliy Potapov looks at the prospects for the meeting of seven most industrialized nations to discuss aid to Russia:

Stands of the G7 leaders on the issue of aid to Russia are acquiring clearer outlines. France's President Francois Mitterrand's idea of holding such a meeting shortly after the Russian-American summit in Vancouver appears to be gaining support.

The Canadian prime minister, Brian Mulroney, went even further. He suggested that the Russian-American summit due on the 3-4 of next month should be joined by the G-7 leaders at the second stage, that is on the 4th. In this case, he believes the G-7 conference would be a logical continuation of Russian-American talks since discussions during the talks would obviously center on the current political situation in Russia and support for Russian democratic transformations and the economic reforms.

It has been planned to have consultations about a possibility to convene a G-7 meeting in Vancouver. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has pledged to discuss this move with Helmut Kohl and Bill Clinton. The French president, Francois Mitterrand, will continue talks with G-7 leaders too.

The stand of Japan, however, appears to be rather strange. On Tuesday the Japanese Foreign Ministry said Japan did not object to the idea of the G-7 emergency meeting, yet the meeting was impossible without a thorough coordination of opinions of all seven leaders. Now that the seven leaders have been trying to coordinate their views, the Japanese prime minister, Kiichi

Miyazawa, declared there was no use to continue pointless talk about aid to Russia.

Francois Mitterrand possibly had this viewpoint of Japan in mind when he said in Moscow that not all G-7 countries could gather to discuss help to Russia in April but only those who wish to do so. Yet he underlined that the meeting should be held as a matter of urgency and it would be better to convince all the partners to take part. With this in view the American secretary of state, Warren Christopher, is expected to hold talks with foreign ministers of the six other most industrialized nations.

It is encouraging that work on a package of aid proposals to Russia has practically begun. The United States experts are doing this on the eve of the Russian-American summit. The package of proposals includes what Russia needs most at the time—increased financial aid, easier terms of repaying the external debt, and access to international loans. The United States counts in these matters on other Western countries too.

G-7 Reportedly Agrees To Reschedule Moscow's Debts

OW1903034093 Tokyo KYODO in English 0322 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] London, March 18 KYODO—The Group of Seven (G-7) major industrial nations have agreed to extend Russia's repayment of long-term and medium-term external debts owed by the former Soviet Union to six years, one year longer than originally planned, informed sources said Thursday [18 March].

The sources said that despite the decision, Russia still needs loans worth between 1 and 2 billion dollars from the Western nations to bail the nation out of its stringent debt situation.

They said the Russian debt due by the end of this year will amount to 18 billion dollars.

With the decision reached by the seven countries, a group of creditor nations known as the Paris Club will hold a meeting later this month to discuss details of the rescheduling program, the sources said.

Russia and the Paris Club failed to reach an accord on the repayment of Russian debt due this year, because of a disagreement between Moscow and the Ukraine republic over the sharing of the debt owed by the now defunct Soviet Union.

Taiwan Seeks To Expand Commercial Ties

LD1803163193 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Report by correspondent F. Tavrovskiy; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] It is known that China has always insisted that Taiwan's relations with other countries should be unofficial. Hence, there is heightened interest in such events as the conference on the problems of developing nongovernmental ties between Russia and Taiwan which opened at the Moscow Diplomatic Academy today.

[Begin recording] [A. Dektyaryev, general director of te Far Eastern Nongovernmental Fund] Taiwan is one of the richest countries in Asia. Taiwan's business is keen to invest capital in Russia. Not that it is a reproach to businessmen from other countries, but Taiwanese businessmen are more resolute people. [video cuts to show Liu Ting-tsu, secretary general of the China External Trade Development Council, being interviewed by correspondent; Liu speaks in Chinese fading to Russian translation]

[Tavrovskiy] Are you satisfied with the extent of our links?

[Liu] There are many unutilized opportunities in our relations. Nevertheless, they are developing rapidly. Last year the turnover between Russia and Taiwan went up by one and a half times and amounted to $500 million. It is true, however, that the mechanism of interaction has not been fully worked out. For the time being there is little by way of guarantees for our investments.

[Tavrovskiy] So, there are rich prospects for our relations. However, we must be extra sensitive here with regard to China. As the Chinese say themselves: You can acquire a poppy seed, but lose a melon. [end recording]

Chernomyrdin Holds Talks With New Zealand's Premier

LD1803152393 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1512 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Leonid Timofeyev]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin held talks with his New Zealand counterpart James Bolger on Thursday [18 March]. The head of the New Zealand government arrived in Moscow on an official visit on Wednesday.

After talks the two sides are expected to sign an intergovernmental agreement on the establishment of airspace between the two countries. On Friday James Bolger is expected to meet with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Russian Vice-President Aleksandr Rutskoy.

More on Meeting

OW1803215393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1724 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Prime-Ministers of Russia and New Zealand Viktor Chernomyrdin and James Bolger meeting in

Moscow on Thursday [18 March] signed an agreement on air links between the two countries.

Chernomyrdin in an interview with INTERFAX said there were no problems for implementing the deal and the question was now of passengers alone. He also spoke of latent opportunities for wider cooperation saying that apart from traditional food imports from New Zealand, Moscow wanted to join forces with Wellington in implementing aerospace and other projects. However, Chernomyrdin said Russia's debt to New Zealand was awaiting solution.

For his part, Bolger was also hopeful of the debt problem being resolved and that New Zealand would resume farm exports to Russia. He said as heir apparent to the former Soviet Union and member of the UN Security Council, Russia was his country's important partner. Bolger spoke in this connection of having discussed a range of issues related to the war in the former Yugoslavia with his Russian counterpart.

On Russia's plans to increase exports to New Zealand, Bolger said that a final say on the quality of Russian-made export products rested with his country's private sector.

Russian experts put the country's debt to New Zealand at about $200 Mn [million], an issue that would be high on the agenda of talks on Friday between New Zealand officials and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Shokhin.

Debt Discussed With Shokhin

LD1903104793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0919 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondent Leonid Timofeyev]

[Text] Moscow, 19 Mar—The debt problem is the only problem which exists between Russia and New Zealand, Aleksandr Shokhin, deputy chairman of the Russian Council of Ministers, stated today during talks with New Zealand Prime Minister James Bolger, who is here at the invitation of the Russian Government.

Russia's total debts to that country amount to around $200 million. Nonetheless, the Russian vice premier expressed confidence that they would manage to resolve this problem since good relations exist between Moscow and Wellington. However, Shokhin said in a conversation with the ITAR-TASS correspondent at the end of the talks that it cannot be solved in isolation from the talks with the London and Paris financial "clubs," whose rules provide for a single scheme for payments and equal treatment for creditors. In this instance, Russia aims to find a type of agreement which would link debt payments with the continuation of deliveries from New Zealand, of butter, for example.

Aleksandr Shokhin also noted that in repaying debts, priority must be given to small- and medium-sized creditors, in particular to farmers, for whom delays in being paid can mean ruin.

Eighth Congress of People's Deputies

Khasbulatov Interviewed on Congress Outcome

LD1803181793 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1523 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Unscheduled interview with Russian Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov by two unidentified correspondents; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Ruslan Imranovich, how do you assess the media reaction to the results of the Congress? Much is being said and written at present and we can see, hear, and read all this. What is your opinion?

[Khasbulatov] I can see, of course, that the results of the Congress have been assessed in an extremely biased and non-objective way. These lies make me feel even somewhat grieved. However, sometimes lies, couched in honest and sincere words, come from the television screen from the mouths of high-ranking officials. But in essence it was a very positive Congress, very positive. The Congress was convened on the request of our regions. In accordance with the Constitution our republics, oblasts, and krays can demand that an extraordinary congress should be convened to resolve an issue which they think is of vital importance.

Therefore, soon after the last Congress, the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies, when the situation with regard to the referendum was being clarified, we honestly began to come across a very negative attitude on the part of citizens, as well as on the part of oblasts, krays, republics, national okrugs and autonomies, to the very idea of implementing an important measure such as the referendum. Moreover, I would like to tell the television viewers that heads of administrations, appointed by the President, came forward as the initiators of a movement against holding the referendum at this time. They were at the head of the movement. Several times I received them, headed by their leader Anatoliy Stepanovich Tyazhlov. The President also received them. The President promised them that, naturally, if the regions were against it, he could not go against the regions. The president and I received chairmen of the Supreme Soviets of the republics; after that, we received chairmen of oblast and kray soviets in our national okrugs.

Boris Nikolayevich assured them if their demand was justified by concrete reasons, he could see no obstacles to postponing the matter for some time. It seemed to us that there was an understanding at some stage and, you will recall, three of us met—the president, the chairman of the constitutional court, and I. Boris Nikolayevich himself proposed to the chairman of the constitutional court, perhaps, to abolish the resolution on the referendum and stabilization of the constitutional system which envisaged the holding of the referendum. But the chairman of the constitutional court objected and said he was already criticized for his peace- making role by the Seventh Congress and, perhaps, if the constitutional court abolished the resolution it might cause unnecessary attacks on the constitutional court. In our complex conditions it is a very constructive body and which, it can even be said, has the last saying in cooling the feelings which are running high at all levels of administration, at all power levels.

For this reason, the convocation of the Congress was in effect unavoidable. It was accounted for not by the desire of the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet or a group of deputies, but by the Constitution itself. I of course expected this to be a very complicated Congress, very complex. But we were all united in that we would not permit any extremes, or any excesses, or any decisions which really infringe the rights of any branch of power. You will agree that if one objectively assesses the results of the Congress, then, generally speaking the Congress did not get out of control. The Congress did not adopt any decisions which infringe anyone's dignity. In effect, the Congress revoked decisions of the preceding Congress which were in contradiction with the Constitution, and restored legality.

That's the first thing. The second thing—generally speaking—the motives of adherence to the Constitution, the need to observe the law, were heard with particular force. Look, we are all concerned about the growing problem of crime. But if we at the very top do not observe the Constitution, how can we fight this crime on the streets? How can we fight corruption, theft, and so on?

So, for this reason, of course, I regard it as being of fundamental importance that at the Congress people for the first time started to speak not just about political or revolutionary expedience, they started instead to speak about the need for the most rigorous observation of the law, including by leading officials.

This is a very major achievement, and in this regard, I feel that if one says...[pauses] well, many people are now raising the question of who is the winner and who is the loser, but that is the wrong question.

[Correspondent] Russia has triumphed.

[Khasbulatov] Yes, Russia has triumphed. To put it frankly, from this angle, the President has also won. After all, he did not want the referendum. Why pretend otherwise? He did not want it and was afraid of the referendum. Therefore, the Congress gave him the opportunity to say: Well my friends, I am a democratic president. I would not have minded holding the referendum. But the fact is that the congress has cancelled [it]. Summing it all up, I think there are no losers in the situation.

Therefore, the main thing now would be of course for all of us to concentrate on the problems of the economy and production, on very serious work like this to extend the economic reform.

[Second Correspondent] I'm sorry to interrupt you, Ruslan Imranovich. I actually wanted to ask you—here we have this very complex political and economic situation in the country and if anyone wants to demonstrate

that he is the good guy and someone else is the bad guy, and gets in the way of all of this, does the Supreme Soviet nevertheless have the opportunity to emerge, despite this, from the political and economic crisis?

[Khasbulatov] Of course, the Congress does have the possibility. The mood of the Supreme Soviet, let me tell you, is resolutely in favor of continuing the reforms. But I would like to repeat that at this Congress we directed the Prime Minister toward the necessity for serious corrections and he spoke about these in both of his addresses. You probably noted that in his very serious speech, his first speech, Viktor Stepanovich Chernomyrdin made a serious analysis and I am sorry that the mass media seem to be leaving this speech by the head of the government in the dark. They are saying very little about it. But in my view it contains very correct and serious ideas for correcting the economic reforms which is simply essential. Last year I spoke about this frequently. It was a year of economic defeat for the country. All of Gaydar's initiatives failed.

[Correspondent] It is obvious.

[Khasbulatov] It is obvious to everyone. People grew poorer. If a referendum is to be held, perhaps we would have agreed with such a one—it is being said that someone intends to hold a poll—but let us ask one question—is your life better two years after the start of the reforms?

[Correspondent] Yes.

[Khasbulatov] Yes. Let us ask one question. The reply is surely clear. Surely 98 percent would reply how things really are. I think that this hysteria which is being indulged in, the howls accusing the Congress and the deputies of being reactionary and pro- communist, these represent an attempt to divert people from the main problems, from the problems which concern our citizens today. They are concerned about their safety, they are concerned about foodstuffs, they are concerned about their salaries, living conditions and their mode of life. This is what concerns them. Why do neither the media nor the politicians speak about this? Everyone, on a world scale, has started considering who among the deputies is the most pro-communist. This is simply absurd.

[Correspondent] Probably, this is easier.

[Khasbulatov] Of course, it is easier, it is more irresponsible. It is totally irresponsibly. No-one has to pay for this, you see, to stand up and speak about economic problems, to propose specific ways to get out of the crisis which is primarily an economic one. I repeat that what we have is not so much a political crisis, not so much a constitutional crisis, what we have at bottom is an economic crisis. The executive authorities are at a loss and they simply do not know what to do, they are confused.

Why have they made such frenzied attacks on the deputies and on the Congress? It is because they have no constructive basis, no constructive, positive programs which would calm the people and inspire them with hope. Therefore, they need to shake things up, to find an enemy.

[Correspondent] To wind things up...

[Khasbulatov] Yes, to wind things up, to find an enemy, to turn the people's wrath on this artificial enemy. As you know, we in Russia have had great experience in doing this. We have learned how to do it in the past 75 years. Those selfsame propagandists who used to operate before are continuing to escalate this entire spiral of indignation. But ordinary people can easily work out what is really going on. By the way, one of the biggest lies is the claim that some 30 out of 31 letter-writers support the idea of curbing and dispersing the Congress, and so on. This is a lie. Who believes it? Nobody believes it. The absolute majority of our fellow-citizens regard the Congress decisions as being the right ones. At the end of the day the supreme authority must stand by the law and the constitution.

[Correspondent] In connection with this, I would like to pose the following question. You know of course that everything is very complex and difficult, but I would like to find out from you: will the executive and legislative authorities ever end up hearing what they are saying to each other?

[Khasbulatov] The legislative authority for example does hear. Practically every draft law, I mean what is it? At the end of the day one needs to understand that the Supreme Soviet and the Congress are not executive authorities. We adopt laws which facilitate reform, economic reform, political reform, and there are no laws which we would repudiate or to which we would make reactionary amendments.

If for example, our enemies—or let's call them opponents, I do not want to talk of enemies because I believe that we do not have any. We are all fellow-citizens—we are all responsible for our people who live in our homeland and not only for those who live in our homeland, but we have compatriots, some 25 million Russians living in other countries in the Commonwealth.

Incidentally, I am planning to fly to Minsk, Kiev, and Alma-Ata to talk to my colleagues, the heads of parliament. We need to somehow work together more closely. We have set up an inter- parliamentary assembly. I am the chairman of the inter- parliamentary assembly. This shows great confidence in Russia and the Russian parliament. Such an assessment of the activities of our parliament is not the sort of assessment which is presented by the media. Why should this be so? Because other parliaments also take up our laws and they are understood. Why is this? Because they are reformist.

Therefore, I would like to say that if for example, I was told: look, we the government and the president proposed that you should adopt a progressive law and you did not adopt it.

You adopted a reactionary law, a pro-communist law, let's put it like that. That is why we are accusing you. But, after all, no one is saying this. These are the specific

facts. We have essentially been working very hard. Yes, I have already said at the Congress: sometimes in the course of a week we have to adopt up to ten laws, drafts, and decisions. Virtually everything that is necessary for the normal flow of the reform we are providing. But the problem is that the executive power is very frequently distorting these laws or is not executing them or is introducing some different content of its own. Remember the old times, and I, too, had occasion to write many articles in various newspapers: in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, yes, and in many others, in PRAVDA and in IZVESTIYA: that there are laws—there are thousands—there were some 200,000 instructions, which were circulating, departmental instructions which distorted and emasculated any law.

The well known academician Aganbegyan said this, I remember. The same situation is now being repeated. We adopt laws: they are either not being executed or are being distorted. That is the point. That is why, we, together with the President, would need to concentrate our efforts on supervising the execution of our adopted laws. Unfortunately, life is complicated, as you can see: the Parliament is not being allowed to normally implement its control functions.

[Correspondent] Nevertheless, we will hope that in the final analysis things will be as you have now said, because this is very sensible.

[Khasbulatov] You know, I assure you that things will be as I just told you.

[Correspondent] I also believe that, because this is sensible. What is sensible always wins. You know, I'd be very interested to hear from you what stage the Supreme Soviet is now at in its work on the new constitution.

[Khasbulatov] We began working on the new constitution immediately after the First Congress. We took the next road. Since waiting for a new constitution to appear...you know that waiting until it appears generally speaking does not meet the requirements of life. If we had waited for a new constitution to appear we would not have had the institution of the presidency, we would not have had the constitutional court, the principle of the division of powers would not have been implemented, there would not have been a standing Supreme Soviet and much, much else. For example, there would not be a whole section in the current constitution connected with human rights, or the development of federal relations, of a federative state—which is a reality in our country.

So we have gone down two, completely logical, general roads. One road is the preparation of a new constitution and the second road is that of making vitally important amendments to the current constitution. However, we are now being reproached about the constitution being different and about the President not having sworn his oath on this constitution—but after this had been said I asked our legal experts to find out how many amendments had been made by the President and how many amendments had been made by the deputies. Just imagine, of 319 amendments 198 were made by the President.

[Correspondent] That is most of them?

[Khasbulatov] Yes. That is the first thing. The quality of these amendments, 90 percent of them amend the Constitution in the same way as the amendments presented by the President. That is 90, more than 90, almost 99 percent. As far as the deputies' amendments are concerned, these—although the number of them is, as you have seen, 2.7 times less than the number of amendments on the president's side—are, qualitatively, minor amendments. They are minor, not fundamental, amendments. All of the fundamental amendments to the current constitution, I repeat, I would like everyone to know, our citizens to know as well, were made by the President himself. All of the qualitative amendments.

As far as Article 104 is concerned—that is the one which the president's side is so indignant about, as well many scholars and experts—this article, which deals directly with the congress...what do you want? We did not ever ask either the first, or the second, or the third, or the fourth, or the fifth congress, to make amendments to the current constitution on winding up the congress. I do not know where this came from. We, naturally, set the new constitution this task. You may recall, at the Sixth Congress we had great difficulty in convincing congress—but it did heed us and we approved the basic clauses and concepts of the new constitution.

There is, indeed, no place for the Congress in the new constitution, which will stipulate a bicameral Supreme Soviet, and nothing else. In other words, our ideas coincide exactly in this respect, but here's the point. We are being told to carry out what amounts to a constitutional coup on the sly. Go and dissolve yourselves, they are saying. Look here; that's a revolution. What if the other side were to say: esteemed President, go and abolish yourself. We cannot proceed by such unconstitutional methods.

So, really, we have made a gentle transition to a new constitutional situation. Therefore, nearly all those clauses in the existing constitution which we conceived, should be incorporated in the new one. There is no reason to abuse the constitutional commission, the constitutional commission's working party, just because it has found it difficult to prepare referendum questions.

Let's recall what happened at the Seventh Congress. What did its resolution on referendum questions say? It specified the basic provisions of the new constitution. What does basic provisions mean? You cannot evade this one question. The question of a presidential or parliamentary republic is too vague. It does not reflect the essence of the new constitution. It is completely inappropriate. Or take the second question which the presidential side is insisting on: private ownership of land. We already have private ownership of land. Anybody who wants to have his own land can get it.

As things stand at the moment, we, I personally, favor keeping some restrictions on land ownership. The bulk of our people are still poor. At the same time a certain proportion of the population have become quite affluent during the last two years. If these people are given a chance to buy up land, arable land, this land may be taken out of cultivation. As a result food production will fall still further. So, we have imposed temporary restrictions on the transfer of large chunks of farmland, arable land, into private ownership. That's the point. There are absolutely no other restrictions.

So, it is yet another lie to suggest that the Congress, the deputies, the Supreme Soviet are making it impossible to obtain land, and so on. Of course you can. You can obtain land, you can own it and sell it. If you want to become a private farmer, you can get land.

We have introduced all this. Therefore the two questions offered do not have anything whatsoever to do with the new constitution. In the first place it was a purely propaganda trick, knowing in advance that the Congress would not take such an adventurist step, so as to then have the opportunity to accuse it of being reactionary, pro- Bolshevik and so on. You know, I, personally as a citizen, if I were a private individual, and I said at the Supreme Soviet and at the Congress, I would be tempted to vote for it, let's have it. But when you feel responsibility for the fate of the fatherland, moreover one referendum in 1990 showed what the possible results are, so of course, in these instances you have to think not only about your own personal opinion, but think about the fatherland, about its fate.

Therefore, the majority of deputies, holding these positions, rejected this opinion that a referendum is necessary. For example, I can tell you frankly, there were serious outbursts with leaders of the regions, republics, oblasts, and krays when I proposed compromising with the president. We had, after all, had a lobby meeting before the Congress, of course it is necessary to seek advice. At a meeting with the leaders of the regions, I said as much: Come on friends, maybe we should compromise. You know such a squall of criticism descended upon me, they said, you're fine here in Moscow, but we have to work there. Plus on the background of this referendum various regionalist, separatist forces may get their second breath. Some might call for nonparticipation in this referendum. Others will propose other questions. Yet others will propose questions connected to separating from Russia.

This is one thing. Then there was great conviction that this referendum would collapse. Imagine if a presidential or parliamentary republic is rejected. Okay, it's rejected, there's nothing good about it, but let's say what then? Are we to reject the institution of the presidency? What should be done then? It was necessary to think about this as well. It is not so simple. I cannot understand why your colleagues, journalists, do not discuss this topic from serious positions. Why were such decisions taken? Why did they raise such questions?

Finally it is necessary to stress the reason of the majority of deputies. For the Congress again, just like the last Congress, rejected all extremes, both left and right. You know what I observed that was interesting. The people who are called extreme left-wingers, the radical democrats, and the people who are called extreme right-wingers, they became allies. They became allies and were in favor of holding a referendum. Imagine, the people who are called staunch, fervent communists, pro-communists, and the people who are called extreme left-wing radical democrats, they held the same position on this question. Their interests were the same. Why? Because from my point of view all of them were attempting to cause chaos, and on the back of this chaos use it for other aims, maybe unconstitutional ones.

Therefore, I would call on all officials, senior officials, all our compatriots, the military and staffers of internal affairs bodies and security bodies to stand up in defense of the Constitution, to be loyal to the Constitution and constitutional legality since this is the only thing which enables us to overcome the crisis. We will overcome the crisis, we will.

We have allocated great powers to the government. We understand very well that it is the government which should bear responsibility for everything in the state. What the legislators have to do is to pass laws and monitor their implementation. We are not striving to replace anyone. For example, the President asked for the leadership of the Central Bank, the pension fund, the state property fund, the central statistical directorate to be brought into the government. Well, we persuaded the Congress although many were opposed. We persuaded them. Please get on with your work and we shall only help you.

Every country chooses its own method of government. We introduced the institution of the Presidency. As you know, this is a new institution for us as is a standing parliament. We have many things which are new to us. There are many contradictions and they are there for objective reasons. We do not yet have the appropriate mechanisms for joint work; evidently some procedures are missing, but we must try to get used to. We must not strive to eliminate each other. That is the main thing. For some reason in our country if we do not like some views we do not consider it necessary to study them; it is necessary simply to eliminate those who hold these views. That is, it is an extremely undemocratic and autocratic way of thinking; it is a very dangerous way of thinking. Therefore, I consider that we can work normally and live normally.

I would like to say further that the last Congress particularly showed that the Congress at this stage is necessary as a very powerful political stabilizing factor.

The Supreme Soviet is necessary, just as all representative bodies of authority are necessary. It is here that the democratic basis of society develops. And of course, we'll be frank, these radical democratic opinions aimed

at fighting against representative authority, they are pushing us toward dictatorship. There is the danger that a dictatorship will take power, and people must understand this danger.

[Correspondent] This is most important, because we in Russia are indeed aware of the nature of dictatorship.

[Khasbulatov] Yes, after all some people think that it is only communist dictatorship that occurs. However the history of a state develops over thousands of years and the history of communism is like a grain of sand in the ocean. Mankind has always run up against various dictatorships and various dictatorial regimes, and both communist dictatorship and anti-communist dictatorship are a danger to us. Therefore representative authority must be guarded by the people itself, because direct democracy is representative authority.

Okay, I concede that the Supreme Soviet is not to everyone's liking. It is not to my liking either. I do not suit some people, indeed not some people but many people. However the constitution exists and there are terms of office. We are moving headlong toward the end of our terms of authority. Let our fellow citizens ponder whom they are to nominate for this power. One needs not to combat the structure of authority itself but specific individuals who are not performing their duties properly.

The main thing for us is to create democratic institutions of power and to strengthen these democratic institutions of power. That is to say, the struggle for democracy, as it is at present, is being moved to the fore. This is very important and it must be understood by all our fellow citizens that the struggle for economic transformation directly depends on preserving the democratic direction of our development.

Yeltsin 'Keeping Silent' While Public Reaction Increases

LD1803225193 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] President Yeltsin is keeping silent but public reaction is increasing, summing up the results of the Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies. Today in the Central Literature House the capital's intelligentsia gathered to determine their positions in the situation of the crisis of power.

Many speeches evidenced a heightened tension arising from the possible departure from the path of reforms and calls for the immediate imposition of presidential rule. Meanwhile, the speakers said the President must give a guarantee that he will undeviatingly follow democracy and proclaim the international human rights declaration for the time of presidential rule. On 28 March an All-Russian rally will be held at which the President will be able to see how many people support him and are ready to participate in a plebiscite.

From the representatives of the democratic movements one could hear certain grievances that the leader of the state had distanced himself from those people who had helped him achieve power. They continue to be prepared to support the legally elected president but are demanding guarantees that their view will be taken into account. In this way, when in comes to forming the Cabinet of Ministers the democrats are hoping to see their own people represented.

Presidential Press Secretary Kostikov, who spoke at the meeting, said that at the moment he is unable to say what decision Boris Nikolayevich has taken. However, Kostikov gives his word that Yeltsin has already made a decision. Thus, all that remains is to wait a little longer.

Those who spoke today were in a passionate mood. Many proposed ready solutions; nonetheless, the president is still keeping silent. Perhaps the wisdom lies precisely in this: to refrain from making rash decisions. After all, remember the motto: look before you leap.

More on Kostikov Speech

LD1903073593 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0528 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] A meeting of the capital's literary and scientific public took place on 18 March at the Central Literature House in Moscow. Radio Rossii correspondent Vladimir Poznenskiy was at the meeting and recorded the speech made by Vyacheslav Kostikov, press secretary to the president of the Russian Federation. We are playing this recording for you to listen to.

[Begin Kostikov recording] I want to say a few words about Boris Nikolayevich's mood. Naturally, he is upset about the results of the eighth congress, although he does not perceive them as a defeat. He thinks the congress has very greatly discredited itself, just like the deputy corps and the whole of soviet power, and in that he sees a positive result of that congress. As the president, however, he did of course lose a whole mass of his prerogatives. But I would say that the congress woke the president up, and at this council meeting I saw the president as I remember him in 1991.

In general, if one is to speak at present about the situation of the president and his place in public opinion, analogies with 1991, with August, may perhaps be too forced, of course. But I think that the moral weight that the president has acquired after the congress does to a certain extent make the situation for the president, in keeping with the possible actions that he can undertake, comparable to that of August 1991.

I think that the president can and does perhaps want to do what, to our regret and to his own regret—he has repeatedly spoken about this—he did not manage to do after August 1991, as was the case for all of us who found ourselves to a certain extent in a political euphoria, thinking that such a situation would continue for a long time.

At the Presidential Council session yesterday the president heard a whole array of assessments and a whole set of pieces of advice, even the most radical, even calls for and demands to introduce presidential rule.

I cannot tell you what decision the president has made. That would not be right. But I am 99-percent sure that he has made it, and I think he has taken cognizance of the massed and massive calls for resoluteness that were heard yesterday in the Presidential Council. It is impossible to wait any longer. The president must do his duty to Russia, to democracy, and to reform. I think the president will fulfill that duty. [applause]

Over the last few days I have been regularly reading reviews of the president's mail. There has been a sharp increase in the flow of telegrams and letters from the localities. The main theme in the appeals and letters is that we have waited long enough and that the time has come to come to a conclusion: Democracy must at last take the offensive. The ratio of letters is about 30 to one, 30 appeals to the president to display a strong political will, and about one asking him to agree to the scenario prescribed to him by the Congress.

I think the idea that the people are now silent and willing to remain silent is wrong. It seems to me that the people are waking up. A huge spate of telegrams is coming in from the regions, and I'd like to say that we too must do everything possible—especially in these days, without a moment's delay, in these hours—to awaken the people still more to active support of the president. [end recording]

Media Official Urges Abolishing Congress Decisions

LD1903020393 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] An interview with Russian Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov was broadcast on Ostankino First Channel today. The political struggle has evidently become so acute that Sergey Yushenkov, a member of the committee for the mass media, unexpectedly and without any invitation from us arrived at the editorial office.

[Begin Yushenkov recording] Everyone remembers perfectly well how events developed at the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies and why the need for the idea of holding a referendum arose. The majority at the congress was afraid to directly pose the question that the president had proposed when addressing the people: Who do you trust—the congress or the president—to conduct economic reforms? So the majority at the congress adopted the decision not to hold such a poll or referendum.

Another decision was adopted, the essence of which was that the monstrous amendments that had been adopted at the seventh congress were not to be implemented. In exchange the president agreed not to hold such a referendum, but one on the main clauses of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Those monstrous amendments to the constitution were implemented.

Why are they monstrous? I even call their monstrous nature simply an anticonstitutional coup. Admittedly, many say that it cannot be called that, that all that happened was a usurpation of power by the soviets. In what? First, in accordance with these amendments, the Supreme Soviet has the right to suspend any decrees and instructions from the president before they are considered by the Constitutional Court. Knowing the speed at which documents are examined by the Constitutional Court, one may confidently say that, in effect, the president's decrees and instructions will not come into force.

But the president, as I am always saying, is endowed with very great power: It is said that he can also apply a veto to the laws of the Supreme Soviet. Yes, he really can. But it can be extended by a simple majority and, in general, the Supreme Soviet immediately considers the president's veto. Incidentally, there have been 40 such vetoes, and they were all overcome by the Supreme Soviet.

One can talk about other articles of the Constitution in which the president's powers are substantially reduced. One can say that when the president swore on oath on 10 July 1991 that he would conscientiously perform the duties laid on him by the people, very little actually remains of the duties that were laid on him at the moment of his election on 12 June 1991.

It is said sometimes that the government has been given very great powers. The leaders of the pension fund, the Central Bank, and the property fund—the State Committee for the Management of State Property—have entered the government. Admittedly, people forget about the cunning phrase may enter, and they remain accountable to the Supreme Soviet. In other words, vital structures on which the actual conduct of economic reform depends are today in the hands of the Supreme Soviet. At the very earliest stage, it is able to interfere in the structure of actual executive power.

One can also speak of the actual courts, which are also completely controlled by the Supreme Soviet, since they are elected by the Supreme Soviet and do not in any way depend on the executive. It is not mere chance that the Constitutional Court does not, in practice, consider applications, our numerous applications, concerning the constitutionality of the various enactments adopted by the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, his deputies, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the Supreme Soviet, and the Congress of People's Deputies. I hope, nevertheless, that now, when we are standing on the threshold of really extraordinarily difficult and important events, common sense will ultimately prevail in the Constitutional Court and it will react properly to the messages from deputies and the president and will abolish the essentially anticonstitutional decisions of the Congress of People's Deputies. [end recording]

Shumeyko Says Executive Branch 'Lost Ground'

LD1903102593 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0905 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Ivan Ivanov and Aleksandr Krasulin]

[Text] Moscow, 19 Mar— "No one in the Government of Russia is counting on Western aid; the only thing that we can receive from the West is a postponement of the repayment of Russia's debts," First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeyko stated at a news conference in Moscow today.

"We are counting only on our own efforts, on our possibilities, on Russia's potential," he stressed. "We do not need 'tied' credits any more; we do not intend to create jobs in the West; we no longer intend to take on credits which would increase our debts."

Vladimir Shumeyko stressed that Russia has sufficient natural resources which it can continue to export to the West to develop its economy. He noted that Western firms are prepared to invest in the oil and gas and mining industries, "but we have the possibilities of developing these deposits independently and of selling the resources at a profit." Therefore, Russia will be careful and cautious about foreign investments in these sectors.

Asked by ITAR-TASS correspondents about possible changes in the government, referred to a few days ago by the president, Vladimir Shumeyko said that "the president makes changes in the government in response to submissions made by the prime minister, but so far this question has not been discussed with me."

Referring to the possibility of holding a nationwide survey in Russia, Vladimir Shumeyko disclosed that a plebiscite is being prepared. "A public fund in support of the survey has already been set up, and tens of millions of rubles have already been contributed to it," he added, stressing that the government and the president will not take a direct part in preparatory work. That is the job of public opinion, he said.

Speaking about the results of the Congress, the first deputy prime minister acknowledged that the executive branch of power has lost ground to some extent. In the near future, according to Vladimir Shumeyko, "the president will call us to a meeting for consultations on what to do next." He also said that he does not believe "in the possibility of a military solution to the political dispute between the executive and legislative authorities." Commenting on the question of pre-term general elections in Russia, about which there was much fuss at the Congress, he said that "there will be no pre-term elections whatsoever, either of deputies or the president." "This is pure political rhetoric," he added. He recalled that pre-term elections were originally proposed by Ruslan Khasbulatov, but said there is no legal basis whatsoever for the proposal.

Sees No Need for State of Emergency

OW1903123293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1146 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian First Vice-Premier Vladimir Shumeyko is convinced that there is currently no basis whatsoever for the introduction of a state of emergency in Russia. He emphasized at a Friday [19 March] press conference in Moscow that President Boris Yeltsin "would remain true to the letter of the law." Shumeyko opined that there would not be early presidential or parliamentary elections in Russia. Touching on the prospects for a nationwide poll, he noted that the president would "not occupy himself with collecting signatures for the holding of such a poll, as there are enough political forces in Russia to tend to this." According to Shumeyko, a group of citizens will gather in Moscow on Friday to advance a petitioning initiative for a poll. The timing of polls is not mentioned in the law, and therefore, said the vice-premier, it will not be declared for any specific date.

"From the point of view of the government, there is currently no constitutional crisis, though there is a crisis surrounding the carrying out of reform," emphasized Shumeyko, adding that there could be no talk of a forced solution to events. The vice-premier called for close cooperation between the government and the parliament in economic transformation.

Shumeyko said that the Russian Government was counting exclusively upon its own powers and opportunities, and not on help from the West. According to the vice-premier, Russia has no need for "binding Western credits" for creating employment either in Russia or elsewhere. He noted, however, that Russia would not refuse Western aid. He explained that the cabinet of ministers would first pose the question of postponing Russia's debts to Western creditors.

In response to an INTERFAX question, Shumeyko expressed the hope that the outcome of the 8th Congress of People's Deputies would make the G-7 think more seriously about supporting reform in Russia. In his opinion, there was an increase in the flight of Russian capital out of the country because of the Congress, and that as a result, the ruble-dollar exchange rate fell further.

Shumeyko reported that the government had asked the Central Bank of Russia for a loan at 10

yearly interest in order for the budget deficit to be reduced by 5 trillion rubles. "Printing money will not resolve the budget deficit; central bank credits—that's a completely civilized method," claimed the first vice-premier.

Sobchak Cited on Congress, Warns of 'Second Tajikistan'

OW1803205593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1725 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Anatoliy Sobchak, the Mayor of St. Petersburg, has said that all of Russia's conservative and reactionary movements had rallied around Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov. In a statement for the press Thursday [18 March] Sobchak said that if these movements were to prove victorious and if Russia was declared a parliamentary republic while there was no stable social and political system or major political parties the nation would probably turn into a "second Tajikistan."

Sobchak was certain that the Congress of People's Deputies had "done more to discredit itself than it had the president." He remarked that the main levers of power remained in the president's hands but that both he and the government were being faced with more and more obstacles to effect power."

The mayor of St. Petersburg suggested that the new constitution should exclude provisions for the strengthening of the current two- tier system of higher legislative power since, in his opinion, this institution, like the congress itself, had "become obsolete".

Sobchak was in favor of convening the Constituent Assembly to adopt the new constitution. He stressed that the democratic movements would be able to guarantee elections to the assembly by registered vote and close the door for the former party nomenclature.

Premier Expected To Seek Control of Central Bank

MK1903054193 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 9

[Viktor Serov report: "President Enlarges Government Cabinet"]

[Text] Yesterday President Boris Yeltsin took advantage of an opportunity given to him by a decree of the Eighth Congress that authorizes him to add to the government the chiefs of a number of economic agencies which were formerly controlled only by the Supreme Soviet, and signed an edict to that effect. This document, according to KOMMERSANT-DAILY experts, will not only make it possible to meet the demands of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin with respect to granting greater financial independence to the Council of Ministers, but will also significantly influence the government's future economic policies and the business climate in Russia.

The presidential edict adds to the government the chairmen of the Central Bank, the Pensions Fund, the Federal Property Fund, and the Russian Statistics Committee and is designed, according to government experts, to coordinate the budget and financial policies and create conditions for stabilizing the economic situation. However, KOMMERSANT-DAILY has discovered that, despite the Eighth Congress decree, parliamentarians have greeted this edict somewhat cautiously, because they fear that the president intends using it to establish a legal framework for transferring the funds of the Central Bank and the Pensions Fund from under the Supreme Soviet's control to the jurisdiction of the Council of Ministers. Boris Yeltsin's quick reaction to the Congress' results appears to be prompted by the head of government's plea "to give the government a chance to work normally." Viktor Chernomyrdin cited the government's lack of financial levers as the main factor preventing the Council of Ministers from implementing economic policy in an expedient fashion. Having secured the opportunity to coordinate his credit and monetary policy with agencies subordinate to the parliament, in the view of KOMMERSANT-DAILY experts the premier has not only acquired extra powers but has also allowed parliamentarians to hold him fully responsible for the economic transformations being carried out in the country—something that may affect some of the cabinet members' terms of office. The new government, therefore, is designed to temporarily satisfy not only the legislative but also the executive branch. However, as they continue to be controlled by the Supreme Soviet, the Central Bank and the Pensions Fund can effectively pursue their own policies entirely independently of the government. That is why the premier's next move, which will evidently be backed by the president, could be a demand for these agencies to be placed fully under the Council of Ministers' control. According to the experts, parliament can only avert this development if it manages, together with the government, to devise a mechanism to control Central Bank credit and monetary policy.

Further on Central Bank Chief Reaction

PM1803142193 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Mar 93 First Edition p 2

[Ivan Zhagel article: "Leadership of Central Bank Dissatisfied With Change in Its Status"]

[Text] "I told the congress—and I still believe—that strengthening the executive power's control over the country's credit and monetary system is a retrograde step in the implementation of economic reforms"—that was how Central Bank Chairman V. Gerashchenko commented to IZVESTIYA on the provision in the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies decree which talks about the possibility of introducing the Central Bank leadership into the government.

During the time of the command economy the Central Bank was, as is well known, part of the government, and that brought the country no special success. It is no wonder that bank staff fought throughout the years of perestroyka for the Central Bank to be removed from the control of the executive organs. When, however, this was done, the government again made an attempt to extend its influence to the Central Bank.

Of course, you can argue a lot about who is the more radical in our country—the government or the parliament. But in any case the bank should not be a plaything whose status is constantly changing. Ultimately, the successful operation of the economy depends not so much on individual personalities as on a well-organized system. And that system can scarcely be effective if the money is issued by those who spend it.

According to the head of the Central Bank, the government has somewhat exaggerated the significance of its control over the Central Bank as far as stabilizing the economy is concerned. The bank itself has always sought the opportunity for compromise with the executive power. At any rate, the Central Bank has unquestioningly satisfied the government's requests for more and more new credit.

In Gerashchenko's opinion, the sole serious disagreement they have is over the rate of interest for centralized credit. The government considers that this interest rate should not be lower than in the free market. And that is justified in many respects, otherwise you cannot check demand for centralized credit resources and, consequently, the growth in money supply.

However, in demanding radical reforms the government itself should be prepared for this. Yet it has hitherto obtained centralized credits to cover the budget deficit at only 10 percent per annum. And if that rate is raised to the level which exists in the free market, it will lead to very rapid growth in the state domestic debt.

Thus, in obtaining greater control over the Central Bank the government has placed itself in a very difficult position. On the one hand it will not now be possible to blame others for miscalculations in credit and monetary policy, while the toughening of that policy has to start precisely with the government. And this will now be very difficult—the sowing season, for which more and more new credit resources will be needed, is getting under way.

Political Parties Reject Congress 'Communist Coup'

MK1903114293 Moscow KURANTY in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 4

[Unattributed report under "After the Congress" rubric: "President Urged To Be More Decisive"]

[Text] The editorial office continues to receive statements and messages from political parties and movements regarding the situation in the country.

—The Russian Peasant Party [Krestyanskaya Partiya Rossii] says in its message that the communist majority at the Eighth Congress achieved everything that the State of Emergency Committee dreamed of. All authority in Russia is being handed back to the soviets, and through the soviets to the Bolshevik nomenklatura. The people have been deprived of their right to express their will for themselves—the right to a referendum. The voters have been gagged! The people of Russia have once again been robbed of their hope of having their own land. The path of reforms has been cut short. The popularly elected president has been effectively stripped of his powers.

But it is too soon to be celebrating, gentlemen! The people of Russia are a different people from those you ruled for 70 years. Russia's miners' trade unions, farmers [fermer], and Cossack troops and the many democratic organizations and entrepreneurial associations reject the communist coup and declare their support for the president, demanding that he assume full responsibility for the referendum. By resorting to any legal means, including rallies, demonstrations, strikes, and Cossacks' assemblies, the free people of Russia will defend what they won in August 1991 and in the period of reform.

The farmer has always been the number one enemy for the Soviet nomenklatura. The communists will not tolerate either the private ownership of land or the retention by the peasant movement of what it has achieved.

—The Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, a statement by the New Russia [Novaya Rossiya] political bloc says, has paved a very dangerous path for Russia. In effect, a right-wing reactionary coup has been staged in the country. The Bolshevik structures of soviet power, which have no parallel in the civilized, democratic world, have concentrated all authority in the hands of the Congress, robbing the people of their right to express their will freely.

The president, stripped of most of his authority functions, has been left as a head of state no longer entitled to influence the course of reform or Russia's further transformation. Real groundwork has been laid for the nationalist Bolsheviks to usurp power, which will lead to a complete collapse of the Russian state.

The president's responsibility to the peoples of Russia requires him to hold a referendum at which the citizens will determine the ways leading out of the current crisis of political power.

Our principled position, the statement says, is clear: It demands the creation of civilized structures of legislative power in the country instead of the Bolshevik system of soviets.

—Having discussed the results of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation, the council of the Russian Social Democratic Center [RSDC]) draws attention to the growing threat to social and economic transformations in the country.

The unilateral rejection of the referendum amounts to the violation of the people's sovereignty as the source of power and can only add to confrontation.

In the situation that has evolved the RSDC believes it necessary to express its support for the system of presidential authority as a counterbalance to pro-communist forces. At the same time the RSDC is resolutely against

imposing any authoritarian rule on the country. Conflicts can only be resolved along constitutional lines on the basis of reasonable compromises among all the branches of power.

Social Democrats Oppose Presidential Rule

LD1803003993 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1645 GMT 17 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Velichko]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar—The Social Democratic Party of Russia is opposed to the introduction of presidential rule in the country and is in favor of the establishment of a government of popular confidence. This was stated today at a press conference given by Igor Averkiyev, acting chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Russia.

At the meeting, which was devoted to the results of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, it was claimed that all branches of authority have demonstrated an almost complete incapacity to comprehend and control the situation in the country. The party leaders attributed responsibility for this both to the president and to the chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet.

The leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Russia consider that many political forces are once more attempting to make the people choose—Yeltsin or Khasbulatov, the president or the Congress. The Social Democratic Party of Russia believes that only well developed civic institutions can act as guarantors for democracy.

Political Issues

Yeltsin Reported in Meetings With Political Leaders

LD1903124093 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin is today holding meetings with representatives of various political parties, movements, and organizations, Anatoliy Kostokov, head of the presidential press service, said. We have not been told by the press service exactly who the Russian leader is meeting with.

Kozyrev Confirms Changes To Be Made in Leadership

OW1803121293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1130 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev who returned to Moscow from Finland on Wednesday evening [17 March] confirmed that there will be some changes in the Russian leadership soon. Answering questions from Russian journalists the minister said that the changes are really necessary, but not related to the recent Congress of People's Deputies. He made it clear that Vice- Premiers Anatoliy Chubays and Boris Fedorov and he himself will keep their posts.

"Everything is O.K. Things will happen in due time: Peacefully but resolutely. You know Yeltsin. Everything will be in order," the minister said.

He accounted his sudden departure from the session of the Council of Baltic States in Helsinki to two reasons: Firstly, his French counterpart Roland Dumas wanted to meet him, secondly, he had to attend a session of the Security Council.

On Thursday Kozyrev is beginning a two-day working visit to Finland. He will spend most of the time in Lapland in the north of the country where he will hold talks with the Finnish Foreign Minister Paavo Vayrynen in informal surroundings.

Report on Kozyrev News Conference on CIS Summit

LD1703150393 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1331 GMT 17 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondents Boris Krivoshey, Sergey Staroselskiy, and Leonid Timofeyev]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—In the last few days, Russia's President Boris Yeltsin has come up with a new initiative that is comprehensive and affects virtually all key areas of development and strengthening cooperation between the CIS states. This was stated at a news conference today by Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Kozyrev.

Over the last year or so, he continued, all the countries of the Commonwealth have been able to see for sure that Russia does not lay claim to the role of the former center and has no imperial ambitions.

On the other hand, any interdependence between sovereign states is all-embracing and ties of integration and cooperation on an equal and mutually beneficial basis are not incompatible with sovereignty and independence.

According to Andrey Kozyrev, the Russian Federation president's address to CIS heads of state contains specific proposals related, first and foremost, to eradicating "hot spots" and preventing new sources of conflict from flaring up. Here the question is of engaging the mechanism of collective peacekeeping forces, as well as of cooperating in this area with the United Nations, the CSCE, and other international organizations whom we expect to come up with direct support. Here we are also talking about setting up an effective security system within the CIS, the minister went on to say.

The president also favors closer cooperation within the CIS in the foreign policy sphere, especially over essential directions of defense of international human rights, recognized by the community, from displays of aggressive nationalism. Andrey Kozyrev said that the address

expresses hope that such rights will be granted to the Russian-speaking population in CIS countries.

Speaking of the urgent need to boost the development of comprehensive economic cooperation, the minister pointed out that it would be impossible or exceptionally difficult to get out of the crisis by individual efforts alone. That is why, he underscored, it is necessary to adjust new market mechanisms of the integration. This calls for speeding up the ratification of the Commonwealth Charter by the parliaments.

'Lengthy' Presidential Council Meeting Ends

LD1703174693 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1640 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Telephone report by correspondent Yuliy Semenov from the Kremlin]

[Text] Good evening. I would like to inform you briefly that the meeting of the Presidential Council ended about 10 minutes ago. It was unusually lengthy, about twice as long as usual. This was because there was a wide range of opinions among the participants with regard to their assessments of the situation in Russia and the recommendations that they made to the president.

But the overall leitmotif was that, in the opinion of the majority of the participants of the Council, the Congress and the Russian deputies had considerably discredited themselves. Not just themselves, but also Russian power—that form of power that they represent. The president's popularity and his support from the citizens of various regions of Russia—polls are already being held or have been held and data was cited—is increasing, and the Council gave its blessing to the president to make responsible decisions connected with the strengthening of democracy in Russia, with continuing the course of reforms, and strengthening Russian statehood, considering that it is precisely the president who should raise the banner of democratic patriotism.

But I cannot say the Presidential Council unambiguously supported a harsh path connected, say, with the introduction of presidential rule or something similar, contrary to the report that I gave about an hour ago. Opinions differ and the participants in the Council consider that since it is precisely the president who bears political responsibility for Russia, then the right to make decisions should belong with him too.

But the president will evidently make public his opinion, his decision, his will, in the next few days. It may be the day after tomorrow. In any event, the preliminary impression is that the path of seeking various compromises with various political forces and certain groupings of deputies is, evidently, considered exhausted, and the president will seek to have as his main ally and his main support not particular political forces but the people, and will make a direct appeal to them.

That is the main impression of what I have managed to ascertain, but I think we will be able to set out the details in the next few days. Now we will all wait for the president's appeal to the citizens of Russia.

Yeltsin To Make Appeal

LD1703211193 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1735 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Report by ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar—Boris Yeltsin "has received abundant food for motivating his resolutions and powerful moral, political and legal support," Vyacheslav Kostikov, the president's press secretary told journalists as he outlined the results of today's session of the Presidential Council.

In his view, the president already has his own opinion on how he assesses the Congress and "on those measures which he will take in order to exercise his constitutional powers, the essence of which is to protect the Constitution, Russia's unity and to safeguard the advancement of the reform movement." Vyacheslav Kostikov announced that in the next few days, perhaps the day after tomorrow, President Yeltsin will make an appeal to the people.

Talking about the course of the session, the press secretary cited a number of utterances of the council members in which the Congress was characterized as an "incomplete coup." According to the speakers, this coup will take place at the next, Ninth Congress, if measures are not taken to protect democracy and reforms. They noted that it was not "the fight between Yeltsin and Khasbulatov that was at issue, but the fight of the remains of totalitarianism against Russia which is undergoing renewal."

Anatoliy Sobchak, a member of the Presidential Council and the mayor of St. Petersburg, told journalists on leaving the meeting that the Presidential Council "was unanimous on the neccessity of passing from senseless disputes with the Congress, the Supreme Soviet and other bodies to active possitive actions that are capable of improving the situation in the country, preserving the state and all the positive things that had been achieved of late, and, most important, of not permitting a halt to reforms and a return to the past.

Session Summarized

OW1803165093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1626 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Report by special correspondent Vyacheslav Terekhov; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature prepared by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin and edited by Boris Grishchenko—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] INTERFAX reported earlier that the Presidential Council held its session in the Kremlin on Wednesday,

March 17. INTERFAX's special correspondent Vyacheslav Terekhov reports:

The president's spokesman, Vyacheslav Kostikov, says the three- hour-long discourse has offered "good possibilities for motivating the president's decisions" in regards to the outcome of the 8th Congress of the RF [Russian Federation] People's Deputies. The Council members gave President Yeltsin strong legal and political support, the press secretary observed.

Mr. Kostikov characterized the Presidential Council's Wednesday session as "most constructive." "The president has come very close to making a decision to be announced in the next few days," he said. "It appears that the president has already made his own assessment of the Congress and shaped his views regarding the measures he will have to undertake in order to fulfill his presidential commitments." Essentially, these measures will be aimed at protecting the Constitution, upholding the unity of Russia and promoting the reforms, Mr. Kostikov said.

During the session, the president was informed that public opinion in workers' groups throughout the republic is "massively tilting in favor of the president." In particular, the Presidential Council's member Aleksey Kazannik, dean at the Omsk State University, pointed out that in the city of Omsk and throughout Omsk Region the outcome of the 8th Congress of People's Deputies has produced a dramatic surge of anti-congressional sentiments. The Congress has over-politicized society, thereby created prerequisites for national support for the measures which the president is likely to propose, he said. The Congress enabled masses of people, especially in Russia's towns and cities, to realize "the impending threat of Sovietization and a retreat to Communism." Daniil Granin, well-known Russian writer who is also a member of the Presidential Council, said the Congress' most conspicuous distinction was in its ultimate disregard for the plight of Russia. Instead, the Congress was "mainly preoccupied with minor concerns of a personal nature."

The Mayor of St Petersburg, Anatoliy Sobchak, and Moscow's ex- Mayor Gavril Popov observed in their comments that the Congress revealed "a devil-may-care attitude toward the needs of the country, actively seeking to discredit the national power structure and break up the state."

Mr. Kostikov pointed out that during the session, the Presidential Council members often branded the 8th Congress as "an abortive coup attempt". "The deputies," in the opinion of the Council members, "were just afraid to go ahead."

In the meantime, some of the members of the Presidential Council said they were convinced that "the deputies of the 9th Congress would be capable of staging a coup unless adequate measures were taken to protect democracy and the Constitution."

In the opinion of General Dmitriy Volkogonov, "the Congress has demonstrated its nature as a political monster. Therefore, the more the deputies were attacking the president the higher became his rating."

Head of the independent non-government Center for Public Opinion Studies, Professor Boris Grushin, observed in that regard that the Russian people need to be explained the true essence of the power crisis. They need to realize that it isn't merely a contention between the president and the Supreme Soviet, moreover, its chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, he said. The country is involved in "a bitter struggle; the Bolshevik power, seeking to restore the CPSU, is waging against the reformists." He suggested that as a result of such revelations, the broad masses of people should clearly realize that there is a struggle going on between the still strong remnants of the forces of totalitarianism against renovating Russia.

In their comments, some of the Council members emphasized that further speculations about compromises are now irrelevant, so long as the very compromise-making tactics has already been exhausted. In the words of Anatoliy Sobchak, "The Presidential Council members were unanimous in their judgment that the time has come to quit endless debates and pass over to active positive activities." "The president, as the guarantor of the Constitution, needs to display his strong political will for upholding the democratic gains of the Russian people," he said.

Some of the Council members, meantime, expressed reservations that the president is making too many concessions to regional authorities, while, they said, the threat of separatism is largely exaggerated. "Separatism is not dominating in the people's minds," they argued. "The card of separatism is only played by certain forces in the regions, especially heads of the local Soviets who were previously holding the offices of the CPSU regional committees."

In this regard, the members of the Presidential Council pointed out that patriotism has always been a characteristic feature of the Russian people. They advised the president to "unfurl the banner of patriotism, provided it isn't crude and primitive but genuinely democratic, in combination with the spirit of statehood which is revered by the Russian people."

The president was told that he is viewed as "the guarantor of Russia's unity and the guarantor of the reforms."

The session of the Presidential Council was attaching major attention to identifying the president's potential allies in his struggle for political stability in Russian society. During the Council members' deliberations, they sharply criticized the Constitutional Court. No one is going to appeal to the Constitutional Court with a request to adjudicate constitutionality of the Congress' procedures. Daniil Granin stated openly that he had no confidence in the Constitutional Court headed by Zorkin. Some of the Council members pronounced the Constitutional Court "a dishonest partner." Academician Aleksey Yemelyanov averring that "Valentin Zorkin is not a defender of the Constitution."

There was a touch of polemics over the need to secure alliance and conciliation among the so-called "wholesome forces." Some of the Council members opined that such forces are available, while the others contended that whatever forces were recently regarded as wholesome, such as the Civic Union, "have proven to be fictitious." This view was expressed, in particular, by Professor Grushin. During the recent public opinion studies performed by his center, only 0.6% of the respondents said they supported Arkadiy Volskiy as the country's probable president, with 0.1% voicing their support for Sergey Baburin. Professor Grushin attributed their low rating to their lack of any tangible program. Meanwhile, Professor Grushin and some other Council members emphasized that the president's principal allies are the people who elected him. "It should be desirable to resurrect the image of the people's president which existed even before August 1991," they reasoned.

The participants of the Presidential Council's session called for the inception of a general democratic alliance, stressing that it will only be strong with a strong leader at its top.

In the opinion of some of the speakers at the session, Yegor Gaydar being one of them, the present situation is providing a most favorable opportunity for the inception of a powerful democratic party. This party becomes a prerequisite now, at the moment when, under the conditions of the ongoing process of revival of the CPSU, the reformist forces of social-democratic orientation have suffered a defeat. The speakers were drawing the president's attention to the process of reconstruction of the CPSU grass-root organizations. The first organization of this kind has been set up at the Moscow State University.

The AVTOVAZ car factory general director, Vladimir Kadannikov, observed in his comments that the working class is not as much concerned with who has more power and where (the representative or executive branch of power) as with the fact that the country does not have any power whatsoever. He reasons, therefore, that the president "ought to show the people that he does have power."

Vyacheslav Kostikov indicated that President Boris Yeltsin is likely to make an appearance on the Central TV to share with the audience his conclusions and proposals.

Deliberations Analyzed

PM1803204593 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 19 Mar 93 First Edition p 2

[Otto Latsis report: "Opinion of the Presidential Council: The Time for Compromises Has Gone Past Recall"]

[Text] A uniform opinion should not exist in the president's consultative council—that is the nature of the beast. Here there is no voting, no common decisions are adopted—everyone expresses exclusively his personal opinion, taking part in a debate, and in an assembly of such various people there cannot help but be disagreements. Such was the case at the 17 March session also.

On some questions diametrically opposed opinions were expressed—for example, "an immediate plebiscite is necessary," and "a plebiscite has no sense." But it so happened that on this occasion there was one assertion with which literally all speakers agreed: A compromise between the president and the Congress is no longer possible. And this unintentional unanimity is itself a reflection of the current political situation also.

It is not only a question of the fact that, during the Congress all attempts by the president to reach accord were rudely disregarded, his proposals rejected without discussion, and sometimes without even a vote—on the decision of the speaker alone, which in itself was a blatant exhibition of lawlessness. It is a question of something else too. It was not for nothing that the Congress did not want to listen or hear. It showed that it simply does not recognize the rules of conscientious partnership. The congress, which can, by hundreds of votes, confirm a tripartite agreement of historic magnitude and then say: The devil confused us, we simply did not think properly, and now we have had second thoughts—can the congress be one of the sides in negotiations between partners that respect one another?

The Congress, which every minute swears allegiance to the Constitution and has virtually appropriated for itself the title of its sole champion, is notorious for its predilection for constant violations of the Constitution, and above all—the underlying constitutional principle of the separation of powers. And whereas earlier this legislative organ made no bones about assigning to its "legislative" activity the administration of state property and extrabudgetary funds and control over the Central Bank, now it has begun to want to run television and radio broadcasting as well. The revival of the CPSU under the flag of the soviets continues: An ideological department is also fully in evidence.

At the same time the Congress conceived a desire to tie the hands of the Russian Federation president, arrogating to parliament the right to rescind his edicts. Hitherto it has been the president's edicts which have to a huge degree ensured the implementation of reforms, helping to overcome bureaucratic red tape or direct opposition to everything new. Now they are trying to turn the president purely and simply into a figurehead. In trying to deprive the president of power and crush the government underneath it in conditions of economic crisis, the debauchery of crime, and the intensification of the problems of the Federation, the Congress is shattering all power in general at a time when the Russian population is suffering above all from a vacuum of power. Maybe some people think that power taken from the president flows into a democratic organ—the Congress. In reality, what the Congress is usurping is not creative power, but only absolute power [samovlastiye]. The power necessary for action seeps into oblivion—after all, it is impossible to imagine the assembly of a thousand voices will within three days compensate for the potential for systematic work which has been snatched from the executive power. The demand of

voters to strengthen the president's power, which is becoming the only force capable of ensuring order in the country and overcoming the crisis, is entirely legitimate.

It is absolutely wrong, in the opinion of one of the speakers, for society to agree to view all that is happening as a conflict between the legislative and the executive organs of power customary for many democracies, and even more wrong to view it as a conflict between the collegiate representative power and the "authoritarian" tendencies of a one-man ruler. At the basis of what is happening is a conflict between the forces of democratic reforms and the old CPSU nomenklatura, dreaming of revenge. At the Eighth Congress the revanchist forces for the first time showed themselves openly.

Members of the council did not agree with the opinion that a coup took place at the Congress and power was entirely seized by the president's opponents, although such was undoubtedly the intention. A plan for further actions in this direction at the Ninth Congress is also obvious. But the hasty "no" which the Congress delivered to all the president's constructive proposals has brought legislators a moral defeat. Having deprived the people of the right to express their opinion on the radical questions of the new Constitution, the majority of deputies have once again shown that they are not concerned with the fate of Russia, but with preserving their own privileges.

Of course, the president's council discussed—and substantially—the mistakes of the president and the president's "team." A lack of action—this was how the president's biggest miscalculation was qualified. His tactical omissions were also discussed, and most importantly—his unsatisfactory style of communicating with the people. But the President's Council does not see its main task as "conducting postmortems," [razbor poletov] but as analyzing the political situation and finding a solution. Today the Russian parliament is writing and rewriting the Constitution for itself, and itself decides what articles it is permitted to violate. It was noted in the council that not one decision of the Eighth Congress managed to avoid violating the Constitution. The outrageous contempt for legality perpetrated by the highest organ of legislative power ousts power itself from the legal domain itself. How to return to it, how to ensure firm legality and democracy—this is where the main question lies today.

Further on Council Session

PM1903130793 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 2

[Aleksey Luzin report: "The President's Ally—the People. Presidential Council Calls on Boris Yeltsin To Be Resolute"]

[Text] "The Eighth Congress of Russian People's Deputies has undoubtedly struck a major blow to the Constitution and to statehood," Russian President Boris Yeltsin said, opening the session of the Presidential Council in the Kremlin Wednesday [17 March].

The main task of the council, which another few eminent politicians and scientists, as Boris Yeltsin himself put it, have now joined, is to assess the work of the Congress, and most importantly, to elaborate a plan of action for the immediate future.

According to the assessment made by Vyacheslav Kostikov, the Russian Federation president's press secretary, the present council session was the most constructive in the entire history of its existence. The president received generous backing for the motivation of his decisions, and powerful and vigorous [energeticheskiy] political and legal support. This helped the president to come closer to the decision which he will make in the next few days. All the indications are that the president has his own viewpoint both of the assessment of the Congress and of the measures he will take in order to exercise his constitutional powers, which essentially amount to protection of the Constitution and of Russian unity and to ensuring the onward movement of the reforms. The president will address the people within the next few days, probably this Friday.

Many members of the Presidential Council expressed their disagreement with the assessment that the president was the loser at the Congress. In their opinion, the Congress completely discredited itself, while the president's rating, conversely, is growing. Through its destructive actions the Congress has created a moral and political situation for the president comparable to that of August 1991.

Members of the Presidential Council expressed the opinion that the president has to exploit this situation by displaying political will, strength, and toughness. The president, in their opinion, has every moral reason to take very tough measures. Many of the council members spoke in favor of the introduction of presidential rule.

Commenting on the results of the session, St. Petersburg Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak stressed that the members of the Presidential Council arrived at a common opinion, namely that the supreme organ of power unmasked itself at the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies. The congress displayed an appalling couldn't-care-less attitude toward the country's needs, an appalling unwillingness to sort out problems, and also an appalling desire to discredit the authorities and destroy the state. That, according to Anatoliy Sobchak, was the tone that prevailed in the actions of the people's deputies and in the decisions adopted at the congress.

The St. Petersburg mayor expressed solidarity with Yegor Gaydar, who expressed the opinion that giving advice in such situations is pointless. In critical situations it is the person who shoulders the responsibility and the burden of power who should adopt the appropriate decision. This decision must be adopted by the president himself, and it must look to the long term, not the short term, inasmuch as Russia's fate will depend on it.

The Presidential Council was unanimous on the need to move on from the endless disputes with the Congress,

the Supreme Soviet, and various organizations to active positive actions capable of improving the situation and preserving the state, saving the positive things that have appeared in our lives in the process of the reforms' implementation, and—the main thing—preventing a return to the past and the discontinuance of the reforms. "Having embarked on the policy of reforms, we must travel this path. However complex and difficult it may be," Anatoliy Sobchak noted.

Sergey Kovalev, chairman of the Supreme Soviet Committee on Human Rights, noted that all talk of compromise is already inappropriate in the prevailing situation. The tactics of compromise have been exhausted.

Many members of the Presidential Council agreed that the Congress has politicized society and has thus created preconditions for the people to support the measures the president may propose. The Congress has made it possible for broad strata of the population to be aware of the real danger of sovietization and a return to communism.

Many of the speakers backed the idea that the president should raise the banner of patriotism—which is a characteristic of the Russian people—in conjunction with democracy.

The Constitutional Court came in for sharp criticism. Notably, it was stressed that an appeal to the Constitutional Court would result in nothing at all.

A certain polemic arose over the need for an alliance with healthy forces. According to some people, there are such forces in society. Other believe that, for example, Civic Union, which has recently been seen as a real force in society, is in actual fact more of a fiction. A public opinion poll held by Prof. Grushin's service showed that 0.6 percent of those polled support Arkadiy Volskiy as a possible candidate for the post of president. In Baburin's case, the percentage was even smaller—0.1.

Many speeches reflected the idea that the president's main ally is the people. An alliance with the people's masses must be actively pursued.

The issue of the need for a single democratic bloc with a strong leader was raised. Yegor Gaydar in particular focused the audience's attention on the fact that, on the crest of the wave of disillusionment with the Congress, now is a good time to create a powerful democratic party. The well-known writer Daniil Granin assessed the work of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies as follows: "I did not hear any concern for Russia at the Congress, people only entertained petty worries about themselves."

The Eighth Congress of People's Deputies has been described as an unfinished coup. "They did not dare to follow it through, they got scared when they were only a step away from a coup. But there will be a definitive coup at the Ninth Congress if measures are not taken in defense of democracy and the Constitution."

Prof. Grushin noted in particular that society has an insufficiently clear understanding of the crux of the crisis of power. It is by no means a question of a fight between the president and the Supreme Soviet, and still less is it a question of a fight between him and Khasbulatov. We are talking about a fight between the Bolshevik power of the CPSU, which is reestablishing itself, and the reformers. People must understand that a struggle is in progress between the still very powerful remnants of totalitarianism and the Russia that is renewing itself.

Many participants in the session pointed to the real danger of the revival of the CPSU, and indeed in its worst form. The former CPSU's reformist forces of a social democratic orientation have been defeated. Information on the revival of CPSU party organizations in various institutions generated great alarm among the session participants. For example, communists at Moscow State University have displayed enormous activeness, and they were among the first to restore the party organization.

Members of the Presidential Council stressed that anarchy generates the greatest alarm among the people. Right now the people are worried less about who has more power than they are about the absence of power altogether, and therefore the president's task is to show the people that this power exists.

Chernomyrdin Chairs Council of Ministers

LD1803082993 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0732 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow, 18 Mar—A session of the presidium of the Russian Council of Ministers opened today with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in the chair. On the agenda are federal housing policy and state support for housing construction, the state program on prevention of forest fires, and the concept of an Russian Federation program in the sphere of communications.

Presidium Approves Housing Policy

LD1803113993 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1126 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—The Presidium of the Russian Council of Ministers approved in principle the State Housing Programme which specifies measures to complete the housing reform as an integral part of stabilisation and restructuring of the national economy.

The draft programme is aimed at a gradual transition "from direct financing, building, distributing and running housing by the state to providing state guarantees of the right of citizens to choose ways of meeting their needs for housing".

Chairman of the Russian State Committee for Architecture and Building Yefim Basin told the government presidium meeting that the housing sphere is the most important component of the Russian national economy

and the housing reform is of key importance for the general success of economic reforms as it facilitates the improvement of macroeconomic proportions, the reduction of inflation, the cutting of the state budget deficit and the stabilisation of monetary circulation through the growing accumulation of private means on special account and in the form of private housing.

The crisis in the housing sector was largely caused by the objective process of transition from centralised state regulation to a market economy, the rejection by the state of its monopoly role as investor, builder and owner, the government presidium meeting was told.

According to materials submitted to the government presidium, the commissioning of housing projects in Russia dwindled from 72.8 million square metres in 1987 to 37.9 million in 1992. Yefim Basin said the new government housing programme provides for an increase in new housing to be commissioned in 1995 to 50 million square metres and in the year 2000 to 70 million - 100 million square metres.

Summarising the results of the discussion, Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin stressed that the Russian Cabinet "has no right to ignore the housing problem" in the present conditions. Chernomyrdin proposed finalising the housing programme in conjunction with the Ministries of the Economy and Finances.

Viktor Chernomyrdin proposed not to consider at today's meeting the state programme for the protection of forests against fires and the concept of the Russian programme in the field of communication. The relevant ministries and department were instructed to work out all aspects of financing these projects.

The meeting of the government presidium continued behind close doors. The presidium considered question relating to the strengthening of the Russian borders, the organisation of the conscription to the Army, Interior Ministry troops and the borderguards.

Expansion of Council of Ministers Eyed

PM1803114193 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 1

[Feature comprising commentaries by Yuriy Rytov, unnamed author, Nikolay Gorlov, and Kseniya Rozova under general heading: "Council of Ministers Now Includes"]

[Text] **Chairman of Central Bank...**

[Rytov commentary] The Eighth Congress of Russian People's Deputies adopted a very woolly decision: "The chairmen of the Central Bank of Russia, the Russian Federal Property Fund, the Pension Fund, and the Russian Federation State Committee for Statistics [Goskomstat] can be ex officio members of the Russian Federation Council of Ministers-Government, while remaining under the control of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet."

Yesterday it was learned that the Cabinet has utilized the opportunity afforded it—Viktor Gerashchenko has been included in the Russian Federation Government and Council of Ministers Presidium.

What does this give the Supreme Soviet, and what does it give the government?

I will cite a few figures. During January-April last year the rate of increase in the volume of money ranged between 9 and 14 percent. In May it increased to 27.9 percent, and from June through October it stayed at the level of 26-32 percent. On the whole, the amount of cash in circulation increased by a factor of 10.4 during last year. Compared with December 1991, wholesale prices increased by a factor of 34 and consumer prices by a factor of 26.

These are the main causes of the inflation which ordinary people are now experiencing so painfully.

The inclusion of the head of the Central Bank of Russia in the government will undoubtedly help to improve the coordination of activities between the government and the Central Bank. The two interested sides will now be able to agree on the total of the credit resources that the economy needs. This will make it possible to avoid the situation where such resources are allocated under pressure from lobbyists for certain sectors and enterprises. There are more than enough such requests and applications. Suffice it to say that parliament alone has now received such applications to the value of approximately 10 trillion rubles!

So the purpose of the innovations is to coordinate the credit policy of the Central Bank of Russia with the government and to coordinate the government's budgetary policy with the Central Bank of Russia. This is the only way the rate of inflation can be brought down.

...Head of Goskomstat

[Commentary by unnamed author] A person can make the right decision only if he possesses extensive, timely, and, most importantly, reliable information. It is easy to imagine the responsibility of those who prepare and supply information, particularly if we are talking of statistics—an impartial science called upon to reflect objectively the state of affairs in the national economy.

Therefore the transfer of such an important department as the Goskomstat to the aegis of the government can only be regarded as strengthening the Council of Ministers. The Goskomstat, which only recently was subordinate to the Supreme Soviet (the department will remain under its control), in the past used to be directly attached to the Council of Ministers. But the most significant information used to come in before, above all, to the Politburo and the appropriate Central Committee departments.

Now the Goskomstat's dual subordination will undoubtedly enable the government, which is implementing reforms, to receive the necessary statistical information

promptly. True, the committee still has quite a lot to do to improve the methodology of gathering and processing information, above all, about the state of new sectors of the economy and enterprises in various forms of ownership. Only in this case can the Goskomstat's materials be the basis for high-level decisionmaking.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI's correspondent was told at the Goskomstat that the committee has provided and now provides the government with all the necessary statistical information, even preparing special information (at the government's request) concerning various sectors of industry and the national economy.

But henceforth purely internal questions will be resolved far more simply. It is a question, in particular, of funding the structure and providing it with the necessary modern equipment—which is important for obtaining prompt information from various parts of Russia. Previously it was necessary to apply to the Supreme Soviet to resolve similar questions, and the Supreme Soviet in turn would then forward this request to the government, and... time was lost.

What is more, the link with the government will now be considerably more solid. Since Goskomstat Chairman Pavel Guzhvin will be a member of the Council of Ministers, by participating in sessions of the Council of Ministers Presidium he will be able to influence the adoption of important government decisions. For statistics know everything.

...Head of Federal Property Fund

[Gorlov commentary] The decision to include the leader of the Russian Federal Property Fund in the Russian Federation Government is a perfectly logical and highly expedient step. This has overcome the artificial separation of two very important subjects of the privatization process—the State Committee for the Management of State Property, which defines the "rules of the game," and the fund, which virtually controls this property. As is well known, the former was originally a government structure, while the latter was under the Supreme Soviet's control. Clashes sometimes occurred on these grounds and held up the implementation of the privatization program.

Fikryat Tabeyev, leader of the Federal Property Fund, will retain his formal allegiance to the Supreme Soviet, but at the same time he will become a member of the government with full rights. The organizational and normative aspects of dual subordination will be settled in the very near future. In addition to resolving purely privatization tasks, the fact that "parliament goes to the government" in this way provides hope of closer cooperation between the two branches of power on other issues of the country's management as well.

..Leader of Pension Fund

[Rozova commentary] The Pension Fund, whose history is quite short, is again having adventures. It was once a part of the government. It was as poor as a "church mouse." Then it began to grow rich before our eyes: The wages curve climbed, as did that of the amount from the "pension" percentage. One percent to the fund from each working person. The rich fund was placed under the Supreme Soviet's control. The arrangement of pension provision resulted in an unprecedented phenomenon: The minimum pension became higher than the minimum wage.

Following insistent demands from the government and in accordance with a decision of the last Congress, the Pension Fund adopted this decision: The Pension Fund chairman can be a member of the Council of Ministers.

"It is, of course, gratifying that the Pension Fund chairman can now be included in the government," Oleg Sayenko, deputy head of the Department of Labor, Health Care, and Social Protection of the Population of the Russian Federation Government apparatus, believes. "This will speed up the passage of important questions in the sphere of pension provision and payments of benefits to the population. Hitherto the government has prepared documents and sent them to the Pension Fund. There its leaders could either issue a conclusion or not. Then the document went to the Supreme Soviet. But the participation of the Pension Fund chairman in the early stages of formulating decisions and statutes will make it possible to render the finished documents more significant. It is one thing to receive a document, and another to participate in a debate and to listen to and express arguments 'for' and 'against.'"

Security Council Meets on Banking, Medicine Prices

LD1703201693 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1818 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—Today a routine session of the Security Council was held at the Kremlin under the chairmanship of Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation. The sociopolitical situation in the country and the situation in the regions were examined. According to a report from the president's press secretary Vyacheslav Kostikov, the problems of providing financial security for the Russian Federation and the problems of the functioning of the banking system, which have come to a head, were examined at it.

Measures to step up the fight against economic crime were examined.

Among the important questions on the Security Council agenda there were measures to provide for the health of the nation. In this connection, a price policy with regard to medicine was discussed. In particular, it was acknowledged necessary to establish fixed prices on the medical preparations in which the population is most in need.

'Political Problems' Not Discussed

PM1803124793 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 18 Mar 93 p 1

[Own Information report under the general heading "What the Security Council Decided: Versions": "How to Treat Russians' Ailments..."]

[Text] The Security Council session held in the Kremlin yesterday under the chairmanship of President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation examined urgent measures to safeguard the nation's health and problems of the security of the Russian Federation's banking and financial system.

The Russian Council of Ministers has been instructed to set fixed prices for medicines, medical equipment, and medical goods. A decision was made to stop the privatization of treatment and prevention institutions, pharmacies, pharmaceutical supply depots, and medical supply bases before the end of 1993.

Yuriy Skokov, secretary of the Security Council, delivered the report on the second question, and during the discussion it was stressed that the creation of an effective finance and credit system and the strengthening of the fight against financial and economic crime are the most important tasks facing the organs of state management at all levels.

According to our information, domestic political problems were not discussed at this session of the Security Council.

Rights Committee Reacts to Security Ministry Law

PM1703141993 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 16 Mar 93 First Edition p 6

[Yuriy Bespalov article: "State Security Service Trying To Regain Its Former Omnipotence"]

[Text] The Russian Federation Security Ministry has prepared a draft Law "On Amendments and Additions to the Russian Federation Law 'On Operational Investigation Activity in the Russian Federation' and to the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and the Criminal Procedure Code of the RSFSR" and a draft Law "On the Federal Organs of State Security" and has presented them to the Supreme Soviet for discussion.

"The 'frankness' of the two draft laws, which infringe citizens' constitutional rights and are contrary to Russia's international commitments, require them to be viewed as an extraordinary phenomenon and an attempt to use the Supreme Soviet to give a 'legal' form to the highhandedness and omnipotence of the state security organs in the complete absence of any effective control mechanisms," a statement signed by S. Kovalev, chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet Human Rights Committee, says.

Commenting on this statement, Russian People's Deputy Sergey Sirotkin, a member of the Human Rights Committee, noted that the drafts proposed by the Security Ministry are absolutely unacceptable even as a basis for discussion. "As far as we are concerned the very point and thrust of them are unacceptable—the practical adoption of the drafts would be a serious step toward restoring the police state on a 'legal' basis with all its essential attributes: political investigation, total surveillance, and spy mania."

That is also the conclusion of three independent experts who analyzed the drafts at the request of the Human Rights Committee.

What changes does the Security Ministry envisage to the existing legislation? For example, it deems it acceptable to allow telephone tapping, the interception of mail, and the inspection of premises without the prosecutor's authorization (that is, secret searches) but merely on the basis of a "valid order of the leadership of the organ carrying out the operational investigating activity" and furthermore even before the elements of a crime have been established. According to the drafts the leader of any organization, even a nonstate ones, will be obliged to "assist" those organs and accept state security staffers for employment "on assignment," and the obligation to install special eavesdropping devices will be extended to all organizations and even individuals "providing telephone services." The draft laws envisage rigorous liability in the event of refusal to "cooperate" in this way.

These documents contain norms which are completely inconceivable in a civilized society. For example, the proposal to examine factual data received as a result of operational investigating activity (for which read tape recordings of conversations, agents' reports, and so forth) as evidence in court or the possibility of releasing people from criminal liability for "active repentance" (which according to the draft laws means cooperation with the security organs).

We are not dealing simply with ill-prepared legal documents here, S. Sirotkin believes. The Security Ministry is determinedly trying to return to the days when the KGB's completely uncontrolled activity was the basis of the USSR state system. Therefore the Supreme Soviet cannot limit itself merely to rejecting the draft laws (incidentally, one of the draft laws returned to the Security Ministry was sent back to the Supreme Soviet a week and a half later virtually unchanged). The situation, according to the Human Rights Committee, demands a clearer and unambiguous political assessment.

"We are now facing a quite clear choice: Either the militia, the prosecutor's office, and the state security system are departments in a normal civilized state or they remain the pillars of that state system which existed in our country for 75 years," S. Sirotkin said.

Gorbachev Not To Run in Next Elections

LD1803123293 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1204 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Nizhnyy Novgorod (Volga region) March 18 ITAR-TASS—The weakening of presidential power is against the country's interests, ex-President of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev told inhabitants in Nizhnyy Novgorod, where he is on his first-ever visit to this major industrial centre on the Volga.

Gorbachev arrived in Nizhnyy Novgorod on Wednesday [17 March] in a regular flight from Moscow at the

invitation of local authorities to look into ways his international foundation can help solve specific problems of the region.

Asked about his view on the recent Congress of People's Deputies of Russia, Gorbachev said it was time for new general elections because no one among the top politicians can generate policies as they have exhausted themselves.

According to Gorbachev, the early elections at all tiers of power are the only way out of the constitutional crisis and these general elections must be held before it is too late, this spring.

"Personally I do not intend to run for any office at any level," Gorbachev said.

Calls For Strong Presidency, Early Elections

OW1703195593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1918 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev speaking at a meeting of local administration officials in Nizhniy Novgorod, a Russian city in the Volga region, has called for a strong Russian presidency and an early general election. Gorbachev held out promises of support to the local authorities in arranging contacts with other countries, and Germany in particular.

The ex-Soviet President outlined his own views about privatization, including larger industries. He thinks the interests of the managerial corps must be taken into account while a state- owned business is turned into a share-holding company.

'Labor Moscow' Calls For Rebirth of Soviet Union

OW1703200093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1918 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Participants in an assembly organized by the Labor Moscow (Trudovaya Moskva) movement and the United Workers' Front called for the rebirth of the Soviet Union and a halt to the "anti- populous and inhuman" reforms. Demonstrating on Wednesday [17 March] in the center of Moscow, across from the Moscow Council, they voiced their protest against the referendum and attempts to disband the Congress. One of Labor Moscow's leaders, Viktor Anpilov, claimed that "today the president convened the Security Council to announce a state of emergency in Russia."

Participants in the assembly included former general Aleksandr Makashov, Svetlana Goryacheva, National Salvation Front leader Mikhail Astafyev, former USSR people's deputy Sazhiy Umalatova, and others. According to law enforcement representatives, about 4,000 people were on hand.

Democratic Choice Faction Backs Yeltsin

LD1703220793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1320 GMT 17 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[Summary] Moscow, 17 Mar—Galina Starovoytova and a number of other leaders of the Democratic Choice faction have decided to suggest to Boris Yeltsin that he should sign a cooperation agreement with them, the Democratic Russia press service reported today. In connection with Yeltsin's statement yesterday that personnel changes were possible within the Council of Ministers, Lev Ponomarev, cochairman of Democratic Russia, cabled Yeltsin today to say that it would be a mistake to fire ministers such as Chubays, Kozyrev, Shumeyko, Fedorov, and Shokhin.

Deputy Minister Comments on Resignation

PM1703170593 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 16 Mar 93 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Party Said: 'You Must!'—and Deputy Minister Resigned"]

[Text] The resignation of Deputy Labor Minister Pavel Kudyukin has been accepted. It is a pity that a unique "democratic" experiment has ended in the departure of an active political figure.

Let us recall the prehistory. The antepenultimate government was formed on the basis of the idea of mutual cohesion, and just two portfolios were accredited by an active political force—the Social Democratic Party of Russia [SDPR]. They were both destined for the Ministry of Labor. The first post was held by Aleksandr Shokhin (not, incidentally, a member of the SDPR), and the second—that of deputy minister—by Pavel Kudyukin, deputy chairman of the SDPR. Now, obeying his party's demand, Pavel Kudyukin has resigned.

But you must not think that only the mechanism of party discipline took effect. "I agree in principle with the political council's position," Pavel Kudyukin commented on his decision. "When you cannot effectively influence a situation, it is better to go."

Commenting on his decision for ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI's correspondent, Pavel Kudyukin cited as the present government's chief mistake its underestimation of social questions in implementing reforms. In the opinion of the ex-deputy minister, social problems could have occupied a worthier place. Many of the goals proclaimed by the government remain an empty declaration.

While quitting the post of deputy minister, Pavel Kudyukin does not intend to leave active political life and abandon his "subject"—the trade unions. He is becoming general director of the new Russian-U.S. Institute of Trade Union Studies and Education.

Military Issues

Pacific Fleet Commander Denies Reports of Dismissal

OW1803130593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1131 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In an interview for IF [INTERFAX] the Commander of the Pacific Fleet Gennadiy Khvatov has denied media reports about his dismissal. He says he remains the commander as no official order about his dismissal has reached Vladivostok.

The dismissal reports appeared following tragic developments at a naval training center in Russky Island where four young men died of malnutrition and brutal treatment.

The commander said that as soon as he learned about the tragedy in the island he took steps "to tighten discipline at the unit, improve the moral atmosphere and boost food supplies". He claimed the situation is growing stable.

Khvatov said that last December speaking at a session of the presidium of parliament he insisted on getting permission to import discharged warships and spend the returns on the needs of the fleet. Permission was not given, he said.

Unofficial sources claim that an aide of the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy should become the new commander of the Pacific fleet.

Grachev Confirms Dismissal

LD1903075493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0701 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Naryshkin]

[Text] Severomorsk, Murmansk region March 19 TASS—No decision has been made yet about who will be a new commander of the Pacific Fleet, but the problems will be settled in the forthcoming days, Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, now visiting the Northern Fleet, told ITAR-TASS.

Addressing officers of the Northern Fleet in Severomorsk today, he reaffirmed that Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Gennadiy Khvatov had been removed from his post on March 11. The dismissal was the result of the tragedy that took place on the Russkiy Island, where four sailors died and about 500 were taken to hospital because of an outbreak of intestinal diseases and bad food given to servicemen.

Admiral Khvatov Retires

OW1903121393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1148 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On the order to Russia's Defense Minister of March 11, the Commander in Chief [CinC], Pacific, Vice Admiral Gennadiy Khvatov has been relieved of his duties and retired. General Grachev's order to that effect was received in Vladivostok on March 18, a spokesman for the HQs of the Pacific Fleet told Interfax. In the defense minister's order gives unsatisfactory organization and lack of supervision over the activities of the Pacific Fleet brass as the reasons for Vice Admiral Khvatov's retirement.

In particular, the primary motive for the CinC's retirement were the tragic events at the Pacific Fleet training center at the Island Russkiy where four cadets died as a result of hazing and malnutrition.

The same order of the Russian defense minister relieves of their duties and retires the Pacific Fleet Deputy Commander for Personnel Education Rear Admiral Stepanov and Deputy Pacific Fleet Commander Captain 1st Rank Denisenko.

Also relieved of his duties and demoted was deputy Pacific Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Ryzhenko. First Deputy Commander, Pacific, Vice Admiral Kalabin and Chief of Staff, Pacific, Vice Admiral Faleyev.

Defense Minister Arrives in Northern Fleet HQ Severomorsk

OW1803123793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1131 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Thursday [18 March], Russia's Defense Minister Pavel Grachev arrived in Severomorsk, where the headquarters of the Northern Fleet are located. Grachev will meet with the fleet commanders and personnel and visit a nuclear submarine and the aircraft-carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov. The Russian Defense Ministry's commission, led by Deputy Defense Minister Georgiy Kondratyev, will inform Pavel Grachev of the northern fleet's combat readiness and of measures to solve the social problems facing the naval personnel.

Comments on Vulnerability

LD1903095993 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0903 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Vasiliy Belousov and Andrey Narashkin]

[Text] Murmansk March 19 TASS—"The oceanic and sea littorals are Russia's most vulnerable spots from the military point of view," Russian Defence Minister General Pavel Grachev, who is now on an inspection tour of the Russian Northern Navy, told journalists at one of the local naval garrisons here on Thursday. However, he noted that the highly precise long-distance weapons on Russian warships and the navy's large amphibian landing units allowed it to conduct sea-to-ground strategic actions.

"The Northern Navy, which is Russia's most powerful naval force, deserves praise for its combat readiness," Grachev said. "However, we are concerned about military discipline on the warships and in ground naval units," he added.

The minister expressed the hope that the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation would reconsider its decision to put off the enlistment of students from various educational establishments. "There will be nobody to serve in the armed forces if no measures are taken," he said.

The defence minister is expected to meet today the crews of an atomic-propelled missile cruiser and a destroyer. A meeting of the Naval Military Council is expected to be held today afternoon.

Discusses New Fleet Structure, Manpower

OW1903123693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1147 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The building of the Russian fleet in 1993-95 and thereafter will, according to existing plans, involve a reduction in manpower and a change in structure and staffing to accommodate the current military and political situation, while taking into account Russia's real economic possibilities. The statement was made by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev at a Thursday [18 March] meeting with the command of the Northern Fleet in Severomorsk (Murmansk oblast).

In addition to the purchase of equipment, said Grachev, priority will be given to the development of submarines and multi-purpose surface craft. The construction of earlier-ordered vessels will continue, as will preparation for limitations in the serial construction of the projected, qualitatively-different fourth generation of ships. Thus, emphasized the minister, there will be no decline in the level of military preparedness.

He noted the necessity of establishing a Russian fleet capable of being "an effective instrument of the nation's foreign policy and a guarantee of its economic interests and national security." He added that he assumed an ongoing presence by small observer corps in certain points in the world.

Grachev also reported that the Russian government "had fully approved" the defense ministry's recommendations on call-ups into the armed forces. It is assumed that every able-bodied young man of up to 25 years of age will be obligated to serve a certain term in the army at a time of his choosing.

If the parliament ratifies the resolution, noted the minister, it will be possible in the next 12 to 18 months to staff military units up to a level of "at least 90%."

Grachev further reported that work was currently being done on doubling military money allowances. Since January 1993, they have already been increased by 2.7 times.

Paper Reports on Visit

PM1903120993 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 1

[Aleksandr Pelts and Vladimir Gundarov report under "From Our News Bureau" rubric: "Russian Federation Defense Minister With Northern Fleet"]

[Text] On the first day of his trip to the Northern Fleet Army General Pavel Grachev visited the nuclear-powered submarine commanded by Captain First Rank Anatoliy Tisetskiy. The minister noted the crew's good training and answered questions from Northern Fleet seamen.

The program of the trip, on which the defense minister is accompanied by Admiral Feliks Gromov, commander in chief of the Navy, and by other representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Fleet Main Staff, provides for visits to a number of units, to the heavy aircraft-carrying cruiser Admiral Flota Sovetskogo Soyuza Kuznetsov, and to the guided missile cruiser Marshal Ustinov.

Army General Pavel Grachev intends to devote special attention to the Northern Fleet seamen's social problems.

Colonel General Georgiy Kondratyev, the deputy minister who came to the fleet somewhat earlier and put to sea on the destroyer Gremyashchiy, which carried out artillery firing against an aerial target, pointed out that "Northern Fleet seamen are good marksmen."

Chernomyrdin, Rutskoy on Defense Plant Conversion

LD1803111093 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 0900 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Correspondent Mikhail Zotov video report; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] The fact that Russian defense enterprises are capable of manufacturing civilian output and technological lines that are on a par with their Western counterparts, and sometimes even superior to them, does not need to be proved. For example, cutters made of composite materials for the processing industry, are already being purchased in Germany.

Today, enterprises of the Russian defense complex are now manufacturing machine-tools for the production of steering wheels, for example, at factories which previously made Russian Cruise missiles. But, unfortunately, these enterprises, in turning to civilian production, are experiencing considerable difficulties. Representatives of military enterprises had the opportunity today to talk to Viktor Chernomyrdin and Aleksandr Rutskoy about this.

[Chernomyrdin] Well, we all ourselves must do this. That's the crux of the matter today—from the beginning we have all just been talking about conversion, and now we must move from talking about it to doing something about it. One of our main tasks now is that our defense industries should make the switch calmly; that the branches can be preserved, and the enterprises, too; that the work teams should be qualified, so that we can switch over to the civilian production which we do not have at the moment.

[Rutskoy] The main thing today is to convert the branches of the military-industrial complex to the needs of the national economy, but not to make basins, buckets and saucepans—of course, it goes without saying that we can manufacture these—as you yourselves know we can manufacture serious technological lines which are up to world standards.

[Video shows large unspecified exhibition area housing technical equipment and hoardings and signs pointing to the Russian Federation Committee for Defense Branches of Industry; Chernomyrdin and Rutskoy being shown around exhibition and speaking to correspondent.]

Defense Ministry Panel Discusses Current Issues

PM1703150993 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 17 Mar 93 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Russian Federation Defense Ministry Collegium Session"]

[Text] A regular session of the Defense Ministry Collegium was held 16 March this year to discuss a number of urgent problems of the life and activity of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. In particular, the question of the troops' readiness to implement the provisions of the Treaty on the Reduction of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) was examined.

In addition, areas for improving activity and the new tasks of the military mass media at the contemporary stage of building the Russian Federation Armed Forces under conditions of reducing the military budget and increasing the subscription prices of printed publications were discussed. A decision to work out questions of reforming and reducing the number of military publications was adopted.

Report on Underground Civil Defense Headquarters

OW1803034093 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel and Orbita Networks in Russian 1945 GMT 16 Mar 93

[A. Ostrovskiy report from the "Utro" program; caption attributes video to "Voyen TV"]

[Text] Anyone who has seen service in the army or who has at least attended training courses will inevitably remember this piece of happy army folklore: The unforgettable three green whistle blasts of the civil defense service. No one understands the meaning of this command, but everyone uses it with pleasure. However, it is becoming clear that civil defense has left us with an inheritance of not only folklore, but something far more substantial which military journalist Aleksandr Ostrovskiy will show you in his report. [Video shows views of a city square, a Lieutenant Colonel entering an underground command post via a tunnel complex, a command post with a control board manned by a person in civilian clothes, an officer operating a radio set, a radio studio, and television monitor showing a view of Moscow, a diorama of the city; a caption at top left of the screen reads "voyen TV"]

[Begin recording] [Ostrovskiy] We decided to begin our story on civil defense from this square in the center of Moscow, and from this entrance to the Civil Defense headquarters of the capital of Russia—which like a mirror, absorbed the worrying years of the history of the Great Patriotic War, and decades of the Cold War. Half a century ago, the Sovetskaya Metro station was supposed to be built here. Today, hidden at a depth of more than 50-meters, is the nerve center of the capital, which reacts to the smallest accident or to a catastrophe.

During the Great Patriotic War, from this station Levitan [a Russian radio announcer] warned the inhabitants of air raids. Since then the system for warning the peaceful citizens has been significantly improved. Many do not even suspect that their silent receivers could suddenly begin to work, warning the peaceful city of danger. However, it is better that they remain silent. What does the Civil Defense do today hidden in the depths? [Video shows Ostrovskiy interviewing Colonel I. Kuzyayev, commander of the Moscow Civil Defense headquarters.]

[Kuzyayev] Wartime plans have been preserved in all enterprises and in all branches of our economy. I do not foresee any acute lowering of the level of civil defense readiness for any extraordinary situation of a military nature. [Video shows a model of an underground complex, an officer entering a working Metro tunnel.]

[Ostrovskiy] Since 1971, civil defense has been under the control of the Ministry of Defense. It is a composite part, and that is why all civil defense activities were subordinated to preparations for war. The number of defense installations were increased and shelters were created for industrial enterprises. Closed underground refuges gave birth to many rumors. Some had a basis, but some did not. In any case, there have already been enough secrets in our lifetime. [Video shows underground cables, passages.]

There is a story about the existence of an underground metropolis; maybe this installation is the reason for the story. Chernobyl changed everything; it showed that it is far more realistic that humanity will perish as a result of an industrial accident, an ecological catastrophe, or natural disaster. On 18 November 1991, civil defense became a component part of the State Committee for

Emergency Situations [GKChS]. Presently, it is involved in... [Video cuts to a tunnel entrance among high rise buildings, then cuts to show Ostrovskiy interviewing S. Shoygu, chairman of the GKChS.]

[Shoygu, in progress]... issues of natural and technologically caused situations. Besides, this year we were charged with a rather big task in connection with the delivery of humanitarian aid. [Video shows an Aeroflot cargo aircraft being loaded, emergency vehicles in snow conditions.]

[Ostrovskiy] Hundreds of tons of humanitarian aid have been transported to Tajikistan, the Transcaucasus, and Yugoslavia. Assistance was given to thousands of refugees, and many people were saved from starvation and epidemics. In the last few months, a number of agreements have been signed with foreign states on cooperation during catastrophes, or natural disasters. Here, mutual understanding has been reached far more quickly than with the separate republics of the former Union. It is difficult to withstand catastrophes and natural disasters alone. [Video shows Ostrovskiy interviewing Colonel General G. Filatov, commander of the Civil Defense staff.]

[Filatov] Of course it hurts me that we are experiencing such a situation: Europe is uniting and Russia is disuniting. This is abnormal. I am absolutely convinced that this is a temporary phenomenon. [Video shows rescue training operations]

[Ostrovskiy] The GKChS and Civil Defense system has always been strongly united, however, it too is weakening under the emergency situation which has developed today in the politics and economy of Russia. [end recording]

Economic Issues

Rutskoy Urges Abandonment of 'Democratic Romanticism'

OW1703194393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1918 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia's Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy says the government's adherence to IMF recommendations is the main reason why the economic reform has failed to work. "What we need is not correcting but reorienting the reforms", he said speaking at the second congress by the inter-sectoral Commonwealth association.

Rutskoy said Russia's economy had always been mixed and that was the reason "why we should abandon democratic romanticism and recognise the right to existence of all forms of ownership".

Chernomyrdin Signs Resolution on State-Funded Loans

LD1703220693 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1017 GMT 17 Mar 93

[ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar—Viktor Chernomyrdin, chairman of the Council of Ministers of Russia, has signed a government resolution on approving the conditions of issuing a domestic state-funded currency loan. Bonds will be distributed among the juridical persons—holders of currency accounts at the Vneshekonombank [foreign economic bank]. The loan will be issued on 14 May 1993.

The total sum of the currency loan is established at $7.885 billion. The annual bond interest, to be computed in dollars, will amount to 3 percent. According to the loan conditions, the bonds will be issued in 1,000, 10,000 and 100,000 dollar denominations.

A bond will be supplemented by a set of coupons whose number will be determined by the term of the bond redemption—from one to 15 years. The first coupon is subject to payment on 14 May 1994. The payment dates will be indicated on the bonds and corresponding coupons. The sum of the main debt on bonds and coupons will be repaid to the holder through the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, which has the powers of the main paying agent, or through other duly appointed paying agents by way of transferring a corresponding sum in dollars to the account of a bondholder after corresponding coupons are produced.

For Russian bondholders, the sum will be paid to corresponding Russian authorized banks; for foreign bondholders, to corresponding foreign banks and their branches. The time period of producing bonds and coupons for payment is determined at 10 years from the end of the calendar year during which corresponding bonds and coupons are to be repaid.

Yeltsin Issues Decree on Chamber of Commerce

LD1803211793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1458 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, 18 Mar—Russian President Boris Yeltsin today issued a decree which will create necessary conditions for the Russian Chamber of Commerce to carry out its functions in development of the national economy and the industrial, scientific, technical, and commercial links between the Russian entrepreneurs and with their counterparts in foreign countries. The press service of the Russian Federation president reported this today. In particular, the document instructs the Russian Federation Government to involve the Chamber of Commerce representatives in development and implementation of the state programs aimed at supporting private enterprise and developing the economy, as well as in preparation of the government acts on ways to improve the economic mechanism, entrepreneurship, and foreign economic ties as well as to invite their expert advice. The Russian Federation president instructed the government to include representatives of the Chamber of Commerce in the liason groups for trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation with foreign countries and offer assistance to the Chamber in its work in international organizations.

Supreme Soviet

Presidium of Supreme Soviet Held 17 Mar

LD1703185993 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1811 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Russian Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov held a session of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation on Wednesday [17 March]. According to the press centre of the Russian Parliament, parliamentarians discussed problems on the development of the situation in the country and questions related to the work of the session of the Supreme Soviet. The Supreme Soviet will continue its work on March 24.

'Russian Unity' Warns West Not To Back Yeltsin's Course

OW1803175593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1725 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The opposition "Russian Unity" parliamentary bloc has issued a warning to the leaders of numerous countries of the West which, in the opposition's view, back "President Yeltsin's adventurous course." People's Deputy Nikolay Pavlov, one of the signatories of the warning, told a working meeting of the "Russian Unity" and National Salvation Front leadership in Moscow Thursday [18 March] that the statement will reach the Western leaders through their diplomatic representatives in the Russian capital.

Gennadiy Zyuganov, Chairman of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee, told the meeting that the "hysterical campaign" that the president and his entourage started in the aftermath of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies is designed to help Boris Yeltsin "sell all Russia's property through so-called privatization at bargain prices and break up its strategic shield by using the START-2 Treaty."

According to Zyuganov, the executive branch now has one of three courses to follow, hard, medium, and normal. The first two, the Russian Communist leader thinks, lead to a civil war and so are unacceptable. What he calls a normal option implies "giving up shock therapy in the economy, creating a favorable environment for producers, and stepping up the fight against crime."

NATO Admiral Meets Parliament Committee Chairman

LD1603133793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1240 GMT 16 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow March 16 TASS—The Russian parliament's Defence and Security Committee hopes that the START-2 Treaty will be ratified by the parliament, committee chairman Sergey Stepashin told NATO Atlantic Allied Force Commander Admiral Paul Miller, who is in Moscow on an official visit at the invitation of the Russian Defence Ministry.

During their conversation, it was noted that the ratification process was not all smooth sailing in the Russian parliament, judging by the first round of parliamentary hearings in early March.

Sergey Stepashin and Paul Miller agreed that arms cuts are a permanent process. It is now time to think of what will happen after the Russian parliament and the U.S. Congress ratify the treaty. This thinking has to be done at both the legislative and the executive levels. The sides stressed the importance of holding consultations on this problem in Moscow and Washington.

The Defence and Security Committee of the Russian parliament is planning to hold a meeting with U.S. senators in charge of arms control within the next two months to discuss prospects for the ratification of the START-2 Treaty and the development of the post ratification process. Committee members will meet officials of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow one of these days to identify the timetable of mutual visits by Russian parliamentarians and American congressmen.

Stepashin and Miller discussed the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's new role after the end of the cold war. They touched in particular on prospects for cooperation between NATO structures and Russian armed forces within the framework of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Sergey Stepashin and Paul Miller agreed that it was necessary to work out regulations for the use of the structures as guarantors of stability in Europe.

Regional Affairs

North Ossetian Speaker on Talks With Ingushetia

LD1803143793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1354 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[Text] Vladikavkaz (North Ossetia) March 18 TASS—Speaker of the North Ossetian Parliament Akhsarbek Galazov told ITAR-TASS this Thursday [18 March] that he goes to Kislovodsk for a meeting with recently-elected President of the Ingush Republic Ruslan Aushev "in the hope that talks in connection with the election of the head of executive power in Ingushetia will become more specific and based on the present realities".

Issues to be discussed at plenary sessions are very difficult, he continued. Their successful solution depends on an unbiased political and legal appraisal of

the tragedy in the Prigorodnyy district in North Ossetia, identification of its real instigators and their conviction, the speaker claimed.

"I understand," Galazov stressed, "that the dialogue at the meeting of the North Ossetian and Ingush delegations to open in Kislovodsk on Thursday will be a difficult one and mostly focus on the refugee problem."

He described a concept on this issue drafted by the Ossetian side. "It is not a figment of imagination but a result based on years-long experience of hosting several dozen thousands of refugees from South Ossetia, Georgia, Central Asian republics, the Chechen Republic and Ingushetia," Galazov noted.

"Our attempts to return them to places of their permanent residence on the basis of decisions taken by the third and fourth Congresses of People's Deputies (eds: supreme legislature sessions) failed," he said.

"We are forced to settle these people hurt by fate and criminal activities of national extremists in North Ossetia, despite a shortage of land and economic difficulties in the republic."

The concept provides for drafting an integrated programme in March-April which will be implemented in 1993-1994, the speaker concluded.

Talks Begin in Kislovodsk

LD1803224293 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1602 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Nikolay Styazhkin and Mikhail Shevtsov]

[Text] Kislovodsk, 18 Mar—"By grounding ourselves in the existing realities, we can find a way to resolve the difficult problem which stands in front of us today," Akhsarbek Galazov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the North Ossetian Soviet Republic, noted at the talks which restarted today on settling the Ingush-Ossetian conflict. Congratulating Ruslan Aushev on his election as president of the Ingush Republic, the head of North Ossetia expressed the hope that with the conclusion of the formation of republican structures of power in Ingushetia the talks process will take on a more constructive character. For his part Ruslan Aushev noted that this round of talks must be the beginning of genuine stabilization of the situation in both republics. "I am hoping for success," the president of the Ingush Republic stressed. "We have lived, live, and will live together on the abundant and good Caucasian land." Speaking at the opening of the talks, Anatoliy Anikiyev, deputy chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet's Soviet of Nationalities, expressed the desire that this meeting, which the heads of the two republics are participating in for the first time, be the start of constant dialogue between the top leaders of Ingushetia and North Ossetia to discuss the more acute questions and develop principled solutions and the mechanisms for implementing them. The talks began with separate conversations between intermediaries and the Ingush and North Ossetian delegations. It is thought that a meeting will also take place today between the chairman of the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet and the president of the Ingush Republic.

Leaders Meet

OW1803215193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1724 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] A new round of Ossetian-Ingush talks on the conflict in Suburban district of North Ossetia has started in Kislovodsk Thursday [18 March] with Akhsarbek Galazov, North Ossetian Supreme Soviet Chairman, and Ruslan Aushev, Ingush President, heading the negotiating teams.

An INTERFAX correspondent reports that the leaders of the neighboring North Caucasian republics have confirmed at the opening of a plenary meeting of the delegations that the sole alternatives to a peaceful negotiated settlement is unpredictable escalation of tension in the region.

At this stage the two sides will discuss the return of refugees to Suburban district, the most urgent problem today.

Following the plenary session Galazov and Aushev are expected to meet alone to discuss the refugee problems as the main item of the agenda.

The draft agreement on refugees that Nazran has tabled calls for return of all Ingush refugees whose number is, according to the Federal Migration Service, 49,000; introduction of federal rule in the district in order to protect the refugees; and compensation of damages to and the costs of return for them from the North Ossetian budget.

Vladikavkaz agrees to the return of only those Ingush refugees who were citizens of North Ossetia on October 31, 1992. According to Ossetian statistics, there are 36,000 of them. The Ossetian negotiators also think that Ossetians and Ingush have to be resettled in different communities to avoid future confrontation. The Ingush say that this proposal is unacceptable.

The talks are expected to continue Friday before Galazov and Aushev will leave for their republics.

13,000 Servicemen To Go to Ingushetia, North Ossetia

LD1803220193 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2000 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Thirteen thousand soldiers and sergeants of the Russian Army will reinforce the Interior Troops ranks in the very near future. They will perform service in the zone of the state of emergency in North Ossetia and Ingushetia. They will guard important state installations

and corrective labor colonies. The transfer of servicemen is on a voluntary basis only.

Kuzbass Miners Issue Ultimatum to Supreme Soviet

LD1803145793 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1200 GMT 18 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] The miners are continuing to become actively involved in politics. At a joint session of the Council of Workers' Committees of the Kuzbass and the Council of the Independent Trade Unions of Kuzbass miners, a decision has been adopted which states the need to hold talks with the government and, at the same time, to single out as a separate block the demands relating to the competence of the Supreme Soviet. The following point has been introduced into the decision: To demand from the Supreme Soviet that it should work out a program and a schedule before 25 March for implementing the demands put forward whose solution depends on the Supreme Soviet. And in the event of failure to satisfy the demands, a strike will be announced from 1 April.

In the opinion of Aman Tuleyev, chairman of the Kemerovo Oblast Soviet, another miners' strike will lead to the collapse of the Russian state. And Deputy Tuleyev promises support in resolving their problems when he speaks to the bodies of power.

At the same time, Mikhail Kislyuk, the head of the Kuzbass administration, stated that the last Congress of People's Deputies established soviet power in Russia, but in a state, he stressed, there should be a strong president as well as a strong legislative authority in the form of a bicameral parliament.

Vorkuta Miners Do Not Follow Kemerovo Colleagues

OW1803151093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1410 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Thursday [18 March], the Council of Representatives of Vorkuta's Independent Miners' Union and of the Vorkuta City Workers' Committee took the decision to coordinate further action with Russia's Independent Miners' Union in order to get the miners' demand fulfilled. The council's resolution says that if need be, the union's central body in Moscow should define the date, length and form of the protest action.

Vice-Chairman of the Vorkuta union, Aleksandr Marmalyukov, informed INTERFAX that so far the Vorkuta miners have not made the moves which their Kemerovo colleague had already made.

The Independent Miners' Union and the Council of the Kuznetsk Basin's Worker Committees demanded that before March 25, the Russian Parliament draft the schedule of the fulfillment of the miners' demands with the indication of those responsible for it. They also demanded that a mechanism of extending state subsidies to the coal industry be worked out and that the system of taxing and crediting be changed. If Moscow does not respond to the miners' demand before March 25, they will go on strike.

To quote Marmalyukov, the Russian Independent Miners' Union must decide whether or not to support the Kuznetsk miners. In Vorkuta, the miners stay strike-ready, he said.

Vorkuta Miners Set Up Units To Fight Crime

MK1803130493 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Mar 93 p 2

["I.K." report under "Workers' Movement" rubric: "Miners Create Combat Detachments"]

[Text] Miners in Vorkuta's Vargashorskaya mine, the largest in the Pecherskiy coalfield, have started setting up their own workers' combat detachment. This move was prompted by the brutal murder of a miners family, the Shubins. The mine workers' collective issued a special appeal to the authorities of Vorkuta, the Republic of Komi, and the Russian Federation containing a number of rigid demands: The miners and their relatives demanded that, because of the dramatic growth in crime, Vorkuta should be immediately closed to outsiders. It was also decided to send up to 30 miners to work in the internal affairs agencies on a contract basis.

The miners demand that the Russian Federation president and Supreme Soviet pass as soon as possible laws on the property of citizens and on the sale of firearms to Russian citizens. The mine administration was required to purchase within 30 days 100 special uniforms and OMON [special-purpose militia units] equipment, including firearms, or else the miners intend to use hunting rifles.

National Affairs

Chernobyl Power Unit Shut Down; Reasons Under Investigation

LD1803181393 Kiev Ukrayinske Telebachennya Network in Ukrainian 1700 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Vasylchenko, chief engineer of the Chernobyl atomic electric power station, reported that the third power unit at the station was shut down today by means of the protection system at 1503 [1303 GMT]. The reactor has been switched over to a regime of cooling down in accordance with the regulations. There are no violations of conditions of safe operation of the station. This event is regarded as a zero one according to the international scale of evaluation. A special commission has been set up which is investigating reasons for the unit shutting down.

New Draft Constitution Set For Completion 'in April'

OW1903071093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1409 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Leonid Yuzkov, the chairman of the parliamentary commission in charge of development of draft of Ukraine's new constitution, believes that this document should be adopted by the constitutional assembly which is to be formed in accordance with a special decree.

A draft of Ukraine's new constitution was presented for a nation- wide discussion in summer 1992. The majority of local councils favored its revision.

At the session of the constitutional commission held on Wednesday [17 March] in Kiev, Yuzkov reported that the working group has revised almost 90

of the draft's articles taking into account all proposals. He asserted that the new variant foresees precise division of functions between the legislative, executive, and legal authorities.

According to the draft constitution, a two-chamber parliament—National Assembly—will become Ukraine's supreme legislative organ. Narodnaya Rada (Popular Council), one of the chambers of the National Assembly, will represent the whole population of Ukraine, and another one—Rada of Territories (Council of Territories)—will represent population of different provinces and the autonomous republic of Crimea.

In Yuzkov's words, the new draft envisages to substantially expand authorities of provincial councils and Crimea's Parliament.

An article on state status of the Ukrainian language has been inserted into the draft constitution. Other languages can officially function in regions densely populated with non-Ukrainian nationalities.

The new constitution is supposed to proclaim equality of all forms of ownership.

Yuzkov said that the revision of the draft is to be completed in April and then it will be submitted to the parliament for consideration.

Cabinet Approves Draft Plan, Budget

LD1903104393 Kiev UKRINFORM in Russian 2048 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] [No dateline as received] The draft plan and budget have been approved.

A regular sitting of the Cabinet of Ministers, which took place on 18 March, began with a distinct "limbering-up." Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma, probably still under the influence of listening to the government at a recent plenary sitting of parliament on providing fuel, sowing materials, and means of protecting plants, to rural areas, continued this theme at the sitting.

He reported that, last year, in comparison with the previous one, the harvest of basic crops decreased by a third. In these circumstances, the majority of agricultural enterprises should have gone bankrupt, but the opposite happened. Profits increased 18- fold, and the return on capital doubled. In addition the state gave subsidies of 500 billion karbovantsi to rural areas, and provided fuel and seed, but received no return, Kuchma emphasized. Orders were fulfilled by 50-65 percent for the main types of agricultural products of agriculture.

Ivan Herts, minister of external economic relations, added that at the same time billions of karbovantsi of agricultural products were transported beyond Ukraine's borders. According to his data millions of tonnes of grain were purchased. Where did it go? asked the minister. Yuriy Karasyk, minister of agriculture and food, did indeed try to refute these facts, but each stuck to his own opinion.

The cabinet moved on to discuss the draft plan for economic and social development and the draft state budget of Ukraine for 1993. To begin with, Leonid Kuchma asked ministers about indicators connected with their industries. Some of them turned out to be unprepared for providing full information. The prime minister reacted to this fairly sharply. How can one form a normal budget, without exact data? he asked.

After prolonged debate both documents were approved in general terms, with additions and observations. Ways of overcoming crisis phenomena, ensuring the steady functioning of material production, resolving the most important issues of socio-economic development, and implementing the main positions of economic independence of the state were determined by the draft plan.

The draft state budget projects little more than a 15 percent deficit. Finance Minister Hryhoriy Pyatachenko noted that, if we keep to that level, we will manage to stop inflationary processes in Ukraine.

The Cabinet of Ministers examined draft amendments and additions to certain decrees, and also issues connected with the implementation of certain resolutions and laws of the Supreme Council.

Belarus

Russian Supreme Soviet Head Khasbulatov Visits

Arrives in Minsk 18 Mar

LD1803172893 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 18 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast; report from Minsk by correspondent Vladimir Perfilyev]

[Text] A Russian Federation Supreme Soviet delegation, lead by Ruslan Khasbulatov, arrived today in Minsk, the capital of the Republic of Belarus. This is the first stop of the Russian parliamentarians on a six-day tour of the Commonwealth countries.

In addition to Belarus, the delegation will also visit Kiev, Yerevan, Alma-Ata, Bishkek, and Tashkent.

On his arrival in Minsk, Ruslan Khasbulatov told journalists that during this tour he will also hold talks in his capacity of chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

[Begin Khasbulatov recording] People are now beginning to understand that parliamentarians of our countries have the main role in some sort of process of rapprochement and balanced development, taking into account our intertwined economic, cultural, and civic ties. [end recording]

[Perfilyev] Bilateral relations, economic and military issues, and issues relating to security and customs were discussed at the talks which were held at the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus. Stanislav Shushkevich, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus, stated that the idea of a joint economic space has not outlived itself yet, and there is a need to work toward creating a reliable monetary, economic, and financial alliance.

[Begin Shushkevich recording] On our part, the main thing is to have a normal economic alliance and normal economic interaction. We are convinced that there is no alternative to it, and I hope that the other sides thinks that way too. [end recording]

[Video shows street scenes, Khasbulatov descending from an aircraft and speaking to journalists on arrival; Shushkevich and other officials meeting him; talks in progress, Shushkevich interviewed]

Shushkevich Receives Delegation

LD1803135793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1235 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By BELINFORM special correspondent Oleg Velichko, Vladimir Glod for ITAR-TASS]

[Text] Minsk March 18 TASS—"We have been and remain sincere friends of great Russia and count on reciprocity", Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus Stanislav Shushkevich said during a meeting between Belarusian parliamentarians with the Russian delegation which arrived on a visit to Minsk today led by the Russian Parliament Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov.

"Our positions are in need of some correctives because relations which have taken shape do not always take into account mutual traditions and experience," Shushkevich added. He expressed readiness to begin straight away work on problems suggested for consideration by the Russian side.

Russian Parliament Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov said he saw two questions which must be discussed: First, relations between Russia and Belarus and second, the development of relations within the Interparliamentary Assembly.

Khasbulatov, who is also chairman of the Council of the Interparliamentary Assembly said the economy must serve as the basis of such relations, and the parliamentarians must handle problems which are of greatest concern for the population of the Commonwealth.

Khasbulatov Proposes Single Economic Body

LD1803183893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1739 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By BELINFORM and ITAR-TASS correspondents Oleg Velichko and Vladimir Glod]

[Text] Minsk March 18 TASS—Russian parliamentary speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, currently on a working visit to Belarus, has suggested working out a serious economic concept for the transitional period for all CIS countries.

Khasbulatov pointed out that all Commonwealth member states are undergoing a transitional period, while leaders of the Commonwealth have not realised this yet.

Khasbulatov was sceptical about a statement, made by the Belarusian Parliament Speaker Stanislav Shushkevich to the effect that "by 1996, our countries would find a possibility of making international payments in the classical meaning of the word."

Khasbulatov pointed out that this process will be extended in Russia for at least another five years.

Khasbulatov came out in favour of creating "the single legislative space" in the sphere of economic reforms. "In this way, Russia could encourage those countries which are reluctant to make economic transformations," Khasbulatov said.

Shushkevich Expecting 'Reciprocity'

WS1803160593 Minsk BELINFORM in Russian 1458 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] "We have always been Great Russia's true friends, and we are counting on reciprocity." This was stated by Supreme Soviet Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich at a

meeting of the Republic's legislature with a Russian delegation headed by Russian Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov.

The meeting was not scheduled. After his arrival at Minsk airport, Khasbulatov stated that the main objective of his visit was to improve the Interparliamentary Assembly's activity. However, at the beginning of the conversation, Khasbulatov pointed out that he distinguished two aspects of the talks—not only the development of ties within the Interparliamentary Assembly, but also the development of Belarusian-Russian relations. Khasbulatov, speaking also as the Interparliamentary Assembly chairman, said that these relations should be based on the economy.

However, the negotiations crossed the limits of the two subjects. Issues of financial relations, conversion, and intensification of the Assembly's activity were given the utmost attention....

Summing up the two hour long conversation, Stanislav Shushkevich said: "We need a monetary, custom, and economic union between our Republics." He also emphasized that the Assembly had to increase the role of the ruble and abandon clearing operations that had paralyzed economic relations.

Commenting on military issues Shushkevich said that CIS countries are undergoing a swift disarmament process. This causes a lot of trouble for the Republic, half of whose industry was connected with defense. This is why Belarus needs help in reorganizing its industry for the production of advanced household appliances.

According to Khasbulatov's spokesman, Konstantin Zlobin, the "legislative speakers' positions on economic issues have much in common." Ruslan Khasbulatov agreed with Stanislav Shushkevich that during the formation of independent states within a commonwealth, it is very hard to emulate relations among the countries with centuries-old traditions. It is very important to take into consideration all the hardships of a transition period.

Journalists covering the visit of the Russian delegation paid attention to the initiatives of the Russian legislative speaker directed at the creation of a variety of commissions within the framework of the Interparliamentary Assembly. According to Konstantin Zlobin, this is necessary because the "executive power has made numerous decisions, but it never developed mechanisms for their implementation."

A joint communique was expected to be signed following the negotiations. However, there are no guarantees that it will be signed on Thursday [18 March], because a draft of this document was distributed to the members of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet Presidium only in the afternoon, and it will take additional time to complete it.

It was also reported that Ruslan Khasbulatov delivered a personal invitation to Stanislav Shushkevich to attend a meeting of legislative speakers, members of the Interparliamentary Assembly. Although the invitation was accepted, Stanislav Shushkevich is unlikely to take a trip to Saint Petersburg, because an extraordinary session of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet will be held at the same time.

Khasbulatov on Transition to Independence

OW1803174893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1723 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Responding to our INTERFAX correspondent after his meeting with the leadership of the Belarusian parliament, the chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet Ruslan Khasbulatov declared the necessity to develop a serious concept for the transition period towards the status of independent states. "We are on the point of transition to independent states," said Ruslan Khasbulatov. In Khasbulatov's opinion, "none of the CIS leaders feels this." He believes that even Russia is not an independent state and it will not become an independent state in the near future. According to Khasbulatov, CIS countries need to choose their special path to preserve their cultural, economic, political, and legislative space.

Khasbulatov says that the CIS inter-parliamentary assembly can create a common legislative field in the sphere of economic reforms. Russia, he added, can draw in those countries which are not active in their economic reforms. Ruslan Khasbulatov declared that Russia and Belarus demonstrate a wonderful example for such cooperation.

Parliamentary Delegations Hold Talks

LD1803163893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1621 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By BELINFORM-ITAR-TASS special correspondents Oleg Velichko and Vladimir Glod]

[Text] Minsk March 18 TASS—The issues of bilateral economic and financial relations, conversion and intensification of the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly were in the focus of attention of the talks between the delegations of Belarus and the Russian Federation which ended in Minsk today. Summing up the results of today's talks, head of the Belarusian Parliament Stanislav Shushkevich said specifically: "It is necessary to form a monetary, customs and economic union between our republics." The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly should enhance the role of the rouble and depart from the bilateral clearing which has paralyzed economic ties, Stanislav Shushkevich stressed.

Touching on military issues, the Belarusian parliamentary speaker noted that a vigorous process of disarmament is going on in the Commonwealth countries. This process is troublesome for the Belarusian republic since 50 per cent of its industry was tied to the defense complex. Therefore, Russian assistance is important for

Belarus in the re-orientation of its production to manufacturing complex household appliances to avoid being engaged in "riveting saucepans and spoons."

According to Ruslan Khasbulatov's Press Secretary Konstantin Zlobin, "the positions of both parliamentary speakers on economic issues coincide in many respects."

The speaker of the Russian Parliament advanced an initiative to set up a special commission within the framework of the Inter- Parliamentary Assembly which would work out mechanisms of financial relations between the republics. Ruslan Khasbulatov spoke for the intensification of the activities of the economic court within the framework of the Commonwealth.

At a meeting with journalists, they were informed that Belarus agreed to pay its share to the budget of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

Communique Notes Importance of Ties

LD1803233193 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1655 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS]

[Text] Moscow, 18 Mar—"Relations between Russia and Belarus are a priority in their foreign political activities." This is noted in the communique signed in Minsk today on the results of the visit to Belarus by a Russian parliamentary delegation led by Ruslan Khasbulatov, the parliamentary speaker. "The sides have expressed their resolution to strengthen their treaty and legal basis," the document notes.

The sides spoke in favor of bringing closer together their legislation on socio-economic questions, and also creating in the near future a concrete mechanism for the functioning of a common credit and monetary system based on a common monetary unit—the ruble—the currency of the Russian Federation.

The parliamentary heads agreed to begin work immediately on drawing up proposals to create the legal basis for a single monetary system for the two countries, to implement coordinated budgetary, tax, credit, customs, and price policies, and to form a single economic and customs union. Both sides confirmed their interest in interacting during the implementation of economic reforms. They noted the constructive approach of both sides in tackling problems in the military political sphere.

The chairman of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet expressed his satisfaction at the ratification by the Belarus Supreme Soviet of the START I treaty.

Khasbatulov Says Visit 'Positive'

WS1903130593 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1100 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] Speaking to reporters, Russian Supreme Soviet Chairman Khasbulatov termed the results of his visit to Belarus positive. The communique adopted on the results of the meeting of legislative representatives of the two countries confirms their resolution to strengthen the legal basis of the bilateral relations and to intensify the Interparliamentary Assembly's activity. The document emphasizes that at the current moment, neither Russia nor Belarus has grounds for fears and mutual claims with regard to the situation of Russian citizens living in Belarus and Belarusians living in Russia.

Kebich Endorses CIS Collective Security Treaty

OW1803165993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1624 GMT 18 Mar 93

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature prepared by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin and edited by Boris Grishchenko—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich told heads of local executive power bodies Thursday [18 March] that Belarus' position with regard to the CIS Collective Security Treaty should be reviewed. He considered that the republic should join the treaty, but on the following two conditions: that citizens of Belarus carry out their military service only in the republic itself; and that the Belarusian Armed Forces do not take part in the quelling of regional conflicts on the territory of other states. Kebich was convinced that the Belarusian Army would soon prove incapable of defending the Republic if Belarus did not sign the treaty. "The situation which is developing outside Belarus compels us to strengthen our borders," he said. The prime minister was of the opinion that a number of CIS states posed a considerable threat to the republic. These were states in which armed conflicts were taking place and political tension existed.

Kebich doubted the practicality and wisdom of the republic achieving its declared goal of becoming a neutral state. He declared in the name of the government the necessity to back down from that goal made by parliament.

The prime minister considered it essential to set up an Economic Union of Commonwealth States. He said that this should incorporate agreed fiscal, credit and monetary, hard currency and external customs policies. Economic trade relations would be built on the rigorous observation of agreements with the imposition of "harsh sanctions" on any state which ignored these. Kebich considered that the Interstate CIS Economic Court which was under formation must be given the appropriate powers. After stressing that the above was an official Belarusian governmental statement Kebich announced the results of his consultations on the formation of the Economic Union with the prime ministers of Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. He said that the Belarusian proposal had been backed unanimously.

The prime minister once again confirmed the government's policy on developing a "socialized economy". After speaking in support of the market and private ownership Kebich said that privatization in the republic should take place on a stage-by-stage basis. First of all,

service sector enterprises would be privatized, then consumer goods manufacturing, agricultural enterprises and, finally, steps would be taken to privatize large plants, the Belarusian prime minister announced.

Security Commission Chairman on Treaty

MK1803124293 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Mar 93 p 3

[Interview with Mechislav Grib, chairman of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet Commission for National Security, Defense, and the Fight Against Crime, by Igor Sinyakevich: "Will the Republic Remain Neutral?"; date, place not given]

[Text] [Sinyakevich] Many Belarusian politicians today speak of the need for the republic to accede to the CIS Collective Security Treaty. There are also opponents who think it necessary for Belarus to maintain its neutrality. What do you think?

[Grib] If you look at questions of the security of the Republic of Belarus from the legislative viewpoint, we have determined our stand. At the Tashkent meeting of the CIS heads of state and heads of government, Stanislav Shushkevich, the head of our delegation, did not sign the treaty whereby the republic would have joined the collective security system. Proceeding from this fact, we are working out our own stand regarding the creation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus.

[Sinyakevich] In a recent interview, however, Nikolay Skorynin, the Belarus prime minister's adviser, declared that the republic would sooner or later accede to the Collective Security Treaty. Are any changes expected in the republic's official stand on this matter?

[Grib] It is impossible to give a clear answer on whether we have gained anything from not acceding to the Collective Security Treaty, or whether we have lost by doing so. Many deputies and representatives of the executive branch think that, had we been among the states that signed the Collective Security Treaty, we would be finding it easier now to resolve the questions of securing arms and materiel for our armed forces. Belarus has concluded bilateral treaties on military and technical cooperation with Russia and Ukraine. But these agreements are not always fulfilled. There are various forces hindering it. We cannot simply ignore this. Of course, our sovereignty and our neutrality are very important and valuable notions. World experience shows, however, that neutrality is not to be interpreted in so lopsided a manner. Indeed, the neutral European states are members of a European security system. So there are different opinions, and everything will depend on our parliament's deciding whether we remain in a position of pure neutrality, or we accede to the Collective Security Treaty with certain reservations. Such as, for example, a reservation to the effect that we will not be supplying our armed forces for actions on the territories of other countries. Provided, of course, that this is accepted by the other parties to the treaty.

[Sinyakevich] Does the Belarusian leadership regard military cooperation with Russia as enforced and temporary, or is this a strategy?

[Grib] As I see it, we should orient ourselves toward cooperation with Russia over a long period. There are also economic factors prompting us to cooperate: Russia has raw materials while we have a concentration of manufacturing sectors. It is not so easy to break into Western markets filled with goods, whereas Russia is a fine market for our products. I believe that we should be interested in a very close, well-disposed, and intimate cooperation with Russia. I see this as giving us advantages and adding appeal to our plan.

Kebich Favors Creation of CIS Economic Union

OW1803144393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1408 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Belarusian Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich favors creation of an Economic Union of the Commonwealth within the CIS.

At a conference of heads of local executive organs on Thursday [18 March] in Minsk, Kebich said that such a Union envisages implementation of a coordinated fiscal, monetary-credit, currency, and customs foreign policy, establishing of trade-economic relations based on unconditional observance of treaties and usage of "tough sanctions" with respect to the parties which violate these treaties. The Premier believes that currently created CIS Inter-state economic court should have appropriate authorities.

Kebich made the point that the Premiers of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine have unanimously supported this initiative put forward by the chairman of the Belarusian Council of Ministers in the course of consultations devoted to the creation of the Economic Union.

At the conference Kebich also proposed to revise Belarus' attitude towards CIS treaty on collective security. The head of the Belarusian government believes that the republic should enter the system of the Commonwealth's collective security under two obligatory provisions, namely, the citizens of Belarus will serve only on the territory of their homeland and the Belarusian armed forces will not participate in settlement of interethnic conflicts on territories of other states.

Further on Kebich Proposal

WS1903113093 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Report by Mikhail Rudkovskiy on the Republican seminar on the issues of the development of the agro-industrial complex and the implementation of land reform, held in Minsk on 18 March—recorded]

[Text] [Rudkovskiy] The opening speech was made by Council of Ministers Chairman Vyacheslav Kebich. He

analyzed the state of economic affairs in the Republic, spoke about the implementation of the 1993 budget, the development of market relations, the problems of the agro-industrial complex, military issues, and the increase in crime. But the new concept of an economic union within the CIS became the main point of the speech.

[Kebich] We need a new concept, a new mechanism of relations, and a really efficient, properly organized strong economic union. Its basis should be composed of the states whose economies are most closely intertwined, the states that are ready to bind themselves to carry out firm mutual commitments. Absolute coordination of fiscal, credit and monetary policies should become the cornerstones of the union, as well as efficient customs rules that would not hinder the mutual flow of resources, industrial goods, and foodstuffs, and would not create additional obstacles by means of different kinds of custom fees, export taxes, and the like. This should be supported by organized trade and economic relations, whose violation would lead to harsh economic sanctions. The final decision should rest with the Supreme Economic Court within this union. As you see, such a union would in no way infringe on our sovereignty or our national independence. It would only serve to solve merely economic issues. We will present a more expanded vision of this union in the nearest future. This will become the basis for the elaboration of appropriate documents. I will advance this idea in every possible way until it is implemented in the nearest future. I want to emphasize that what I have just told you concerning the project for the creation of an economic union is the unanimous stance of the government and can be viewed as an official Council of Ministers' declaration.

[Rudkovskiy] The speech by Vyacheslav Kebich and his new concept of an economic union within the CIS evoked great interest on the part of the conference participants. I am inviting Aleksandr (Dunchikovets), general manager of the Horizont Production Association, to share his impressions.

[(Dunchikovets)] What we have just heard are not Vyacheslav Kebich's personal ideas. They were born in pain by representatives throughout the production sphere, including industry and agriculture. We talked about these things long ago. We were approaching this period. Now it is time we got down to the creation of a real economic union with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine in the first place. All the necessary conditions for normal work must be created.

[Rudkovskiy] Supreme Soviet Deputy (Chechik) speaks about his impressions.

[(Chechik)] I have listened to Kebich's speech with great attention. I absolutely support the main ideas of his speech. With regard to the return to the economic union, this should be done immediately. The overwhelming majority of our population, including administrators, have no doubt that the destruction of our great state was a fatal mistake. This has negative effects on the economy of all the republics. This mistake should be corrected immediately.

[Rudkovskiy] They say: You cannot step twice into the same rivers. There is no return to the former Soviet Union. The idea is to create a new economic union.

[(Chechik)] I fully agree with you. We cannot return to what we had before. We must use our peoples' positive experience and improve our relations according to the situation.

[Rudkovskiy] Today the participants of the conference will visit a training center near [name indistinct], where the results of the first stage of disarmament will be summed up and the issues of the protection of state interests will be considered.

Belarusian Supreme Council Decrees Published 24 Feb

Withdrawal of Russian Strategic Forces

WS1903114593 Minsk ZVYAZDA in Belarusian 24 Feb 93 p 3

[Decree of the Belarusian Supreme Council "On Ratification of the Agreement Between Belarus and Russia on Strategic Forces Temporarily Stationed on the Territory of Belarus from 20 July 1992"; issued in Minsk on 4 February 1993]

[Text] The Belarusian Supreme Council decrees [previous word published in boldface]:

1. To ratify the agreement between Belarus and Russia on strategic forces temporarily stationed on the territory of Belarus from 20 July 1992, excluding clause four.

2. To charge the Belarusian Cabinet of Ministers to determine, together with the Russian Government, the mechanism for the withdrawal of the Russian strategic forces temporarily stationed on the Belarusian territory and to control the process of withdrawal.

[Signed] S. Shushkevich, Supreme Council Chairman of the Republic of Belarus

[Dated] Minsk, 4 February

No 2168-XII.

U.S.-USSR Arms Reduction Accord

WS1903114793 Minsk ZVYAZDA in Belarusian 24 Feb 93 p 3

[Decree of the Belarusian Supreme Council "On Ratification of the Agreement Between the USSR and the United States of America on Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms from 31 July 1991 and the Protocol to This Treaty"; issued in Minsk on 4 February 1993]

[Text] The Belarusian Supreme Council decrees [previous word published in boldface]:

1. To ratify the agreement between the USSR and the United States of America on reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms from 31 July 1991 and the Protocol to this Treaty signed on 23 May 1992 in Lisbon.

2. To charge the Belarusian Cabinet of Ministers to carry out the measures necessary for the implementation of this decree.

[Signed] S. Shushkevich, Supreme Council chairman of the Republic of Belarus

[Dated] Minsk, 4 February 1993

No 2165-XII.

Nuclear Nonproliferation Agreement

WS1903115093 Minsk ZVYAZDA in Belarusian 24 Feb 93 p 3

[Belarusian Supreme Council's Decree "On Belarus Joining the Agreement on Nonproliferation of Nuclear Arms from 1 July 1968"; issued in Minsk on 4 February 1993]

[Text] The Belarusian Supreme Council decrees [previous word published in boldface]:

1. To join the Agreement on Nonproliferation of Nuclear Arms from 1 July 1968.

2. To charge the Belarusian Cabinet of Ministers to carry out the measures necessary for the implementation of this decree.

[Signed] S. Shushkevich, Supreme Council chairman of the Republic of Belarus

[Dated] Minsk, 4 February 1993

No 2166-XII.

Coordination of Military Action

WS1903115393 Minsk ZVYAZDA in Belarusian 24 Feb 93 p 3

[Decree of the Belarusian Supreme Council "On Ratification of the Agreement Between Belarus and Russia on Coordination of Action in the Military Sphere from 20 July 1992"; issued in Minsk on 4 February 1993]

[Text] The Belarusian Supreme Council decrees [previous word published in boldface]

1. To ratify the agreement between Belarus and Russia on coordination of action in the military sphere from 20 July 1992.

2. To charge the Belarusian Cabinet of Ministers to carry out the measures necessary for the implementation of this decree.

[Signed] S. Shushkevich, Supreme Council chairman of the Republic of Belarus

[Dated] Minsk, 4 February 1993

No 2167-XII.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Visits Minsk

Interest in Iranian Oil Expressed

LD1803224493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] The chairman of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the Belarusian parliament held a meeting with Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Mahmud Va'ezi in Minsk and asked the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide fuel and energy which that country needs. According to an IRNA report, during the meeting, which took place this evening, the two sides expressed willingness to expand the two country's relations. They also discussed methods of parliamentary cooperation and the creation of parliamentary friendship groups. The two sides also stressed the need for exchange of various delegations to expand the two country's economic and commercial ties.

In continuation of his official visit to Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran's deputy foreign minister also held a number of meetings with other economic officials of that republic and discussed the speedy implementation of a new trilateral economic cooperation between Turkmenistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Belarus and a number of agreements were achieved in that regard.

Diplomatic Ties Established

WS1903100093 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] Mahmud Va'ezi, deputy foreign affairs minister of Iran, held negotiations with Foreign Department Chiefs Petr Kravchanka and Vladimir Astapenko, and Ivan Tsyareshka, chairman of the Supreme Soviet Committee for International Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations. The negotiations resulted in the signing of a communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Answering reporters' questions about concrete directions of economic cooperation, Mahmud Va'ezi pointed out that the Iranian side could provide Belarus with oil and consumer goods in exchange for fertilizers and machine building products.

Moldova

Report on Russian Army Offenses To Be Released

OW1803144693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1408 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Anatoliy Ceranu, the head of the Moldovan parliament's Permanent Defense and State Security Commission, has told Interfax that a "report on offenses committed on

Moldovan territory by the Russian 14th Army" would soon be read out in the republic's parliament.

During his interview with Interfax in Chisinau Thursday [18 March] Ceranu said that the purpose of the report was to bring the world's attention to the problems connected with the presence of the "foreign army" on Moldovan territory. It was designed to "bring about the 14th Army's speedy withdrawal with the assistance of international organizations."

Ceranu said that his commission had gathered "much evidence" about offenses committed by the 14th Army during the conflict in the Dniester republic during the summer of 1992. "Dniester separatist leaders and the 14th Army command caused major problems for the commission" during its investigations, he said.

Parliament Adopts Draft Privatization Program

OW1703001393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1433 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [16 March] in Chisinau, Moldova's parliament adopted a draft of its state privatization program in its second reading. This program substantially completes and explains the republican decree on privatization adopted in 1991. The program stipulates that only the national currency and the so-called "coupons of popular well-being" should be used during the privatization process. Privatization for rubles is prohibited.

Every citizen of Moldova will receive coupons according to his record of labor on the republic's territory. In contrast to the Russian vouchers, the coupons will be private ones and they cannot be sold or turned over to anybody else. At present the coupons are being printed in Germany. Distribution of coupons among the population is scheduled for April.

Moldova's parliament also confirmed a supplement to the program which contains lists of enterprises destined for privatization only for hard currency and of enterprises which cannot be privatized. The first list mainly contains names of various tourist sites, and the second - enterprises of energy, communication, transport, and other branches of industry ensuring vital activity and Moldova's defense capability.

Dniester Leader Meets Officials; Compromise 'Negotiable'

OW1803215493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1959 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Chairman of the Supreme Council of the self-proclaimed Dniester Moldovan Republic Grigore Marakutsa informed an "INTERFAX" correspondent that a compromise on the problem over the Dniester Region is negotiable. His statement was confirmed at a meeting of the Dniester leaders with the Moldovan Parliament Speaker Petru Luchinschi and Moldovan Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli in Novye Aleni on Wednesday [17 March].

G. Marakutsa had emphasized that Dniester leadership and official Chisinau positions on major issues diverge. "However that doesn't make dialog impossible," he said.

According to the leader of Dniester Republic parliament the participants of the meeting have confirmed their loyalty to finding political settlements to all disputes and the rejection of the use of force. He also stated that the problems of reviving old ties between businesses of the two banks of Dniester and restoring a singular financial system had been discussed at the March 17 meeting.

Commission on Dniester Established

OW1803144793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1408 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Leaders of Moldova and Dniester had a confidential meeting in Chisinau on Wednesday [17 March]. Taking part were the Chairman of Moldova's Parliament Petr Luchinsky, the Prime Minister Andrey Sanghely and the President of the self-proclaimed Dniester Moldova republic Igor Smirnov and the Chairman of the republic's Supreme Soviet Grigory Marakutsa.

As the press-service of Moldova's Parliament has reported, the sides discussed how to resolve the conflict in Dniester by peaceful means and define a special legal status for that region within Moldova.

Meanwhile, at its morning session on March 18 Moldova's Parliament formed a commission to settle the conflict in Dniester and in the compact communities of Gagauzs, led by Petr Luchinsky. When the Parliament is not in session, the commission is authorized to decide on all matters related to Dniester and Gagauzia and to make proposals on a special legal status for these territories.

The commission has been asked to submit conclusions on the status of these regions at the next Parliamentary session, scheduled for the second half of May, he said.

Chisinau Helps Dniester With Sowing Campaign

AU1803153593 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1915 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 17/3/1993—Although the consequences of the military conflict can be felt even now, chiefs of farms from Dniester come to Chisinau in order to acquire things they need for sowing, communicated Victor Tozlovan, adviser of Minister of Agriculture in the Republic, to a BASA correspondent. He declared that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Supply offered to spread seeds for all regions, including those from the left part of Dniester. "Only approximately 40 hectares of land near Cocieri cannot be sown because of mines," concluded Victor Tozlovan. From the other side, according to the date

presented by Petru Casapciuc, lieutenant at the Ministry of Security, 387 hectares of land on the left side of Dniester remain mined.

Dniester Authorities Criticized for 'Incompetence'

AU1803154293 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1915 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 18/3/1993—The newspaper of Russian expression "NEZAVISIMAYA MOLDOVA" published today "notes" on the program titled "Roundtable" with the participation of the Russian General Aleksandr Lebedev and the chief of staff of Tiraspol town, Mikhail Bergman. The program was broadcast by Independent Television "Asket" on March 5th this year. Participants at the roundtable strongly criticised the self-proclaimed government from Tiraspol, proving by argument that the incompetence of Dniester authorities generates crime which is beyond control. "In the Dniester region, even 14 years old boys carry pistols," declared Mikhail Bergman. He produced evidence to prove that arms that were "taken by force" from the dumps of the 14th Army and that armaments delivered to the Dniester region were exposed to commercialisation. According to Mikhail Bergman, a large part of those 1,300 automatic- pistols stolen by a group of people headed by the well-known leader Galina Andreyeva, were exposed for sale in Odessa just after the second day of the incident. Participants at the "Roundtable" raised new facts from the biography of the Minister of Security from Tiraspol, Shevtsov-Antyufeyev. They proved that Shevtsov-Antyufeyev obtained his position under the protection of the Russian General Albert Makashov. When talking about those dignitaries who left Baltic countries and obtained high positions in Tiraspol by changing their names, Mikhail Bergman underlined that "if those mentioned remained in their positions then popular fronts would not come to power and we could avoid bloodshed". During the TV program, President Igor Smirnov was accused of corruption. Among the accusations they remarked that "Smirnov's children were offered medals despite the fact they did not fight during the military conflict in Dniester".

Indian President Receives President Snegur for Talks

LD1803002993 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1413 GMT 17 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksey Kuznetskov]

[Text] New Delhi, 17 Mar—President Shankar Dayal Sharma of India today received President Mircea Snegur of Moldova, who is here on an official visit. In their conversation, the Indian head of state said that there are good opportunities for the expansion of bilateral economic cooperation, above all in agriculture and the processing industries.

For his part, M. Snegur voiced gratitude to India, which was one of the first states to officially recognize Moldova.

Moldovan-Chinese Friendship Association Formed

AU1803153293 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1915 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 17/3/1993—Yesterday, the meeting regarding the constitution of the Association for Friendship Between Moldova and China took place in Chisinau. This is the 31st Association of this type in Moldova. It was founded by the Embassy of China and a group composed of scientists, deputies and doctors who showed much initiative. That group was headed by Victor Borsevici, the holder of the chair of radioelectronics from the Polytechnic Institute. At the meeting of the constitution the ambassador of China in Moldova, representatives of the Government of Moldova, and businessmen participated. As honoured president of the Association for Friendship between Moldova and China, Nicolae Andronati, prime-vice premier of Moldova, was elected and as executive president—Victor Borsevici. An airline connecting these two countries, which will be considered open by April, this year, will also represent a contribution to friendly relations.

Georgia

Russia's Grachev Denies Bombing; Alleges Smear Campaign

LD1803170093 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1533 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondent Andrey Naryshkin]

[Text] Vidyayevo [Murmansk oblast], 18 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev described as "lies and provocation" claims by official Tbilisi that the Russian Air Force has been bombing Georgian populated areas. In an interview with journalists on board the heavy aircraft-carrier cruiser "Admiral Flota Kuznetsov", he stated that according to reliable intelligence reports, the Georgian Air Force possesses seven Su-25 aircraft which were assembled at the aircraft repair factory in Tbilisi, painted in the colors of the Russian Air Force and bearing Russian insignia. It is these planes which are carrying out both demonstration flights and bombing populated areas, which is being reported by the Georgian side, Pavel Grachev stated.

"A real war is being waged in Georgia by the government against its own people," the minister said. When large losses began to emerge there began a search for an enemy to whom they could be attributed. [No quotation marks as received]

"Mr. Shevardnadze talks about our armed forces, specifically the 345th Regiment, taking part in combat operations. There is nothing of the sort. I have been in Gudauta recently myself and again I set the servicemen the task of not getting involved in combat operations," Pavel Grachev stressed.

"I can say with all responsibility," the defense minister said, "that our armed forces are not carrying out combat operations. However, the Georgian side is trying to smear the Russian Armed Forces in order to make up for its own errors."

For example, since 15 March, he said, the Georgian Air Force has bombed the Eshery seismic laboratory several times as well as the military sanatorium in the area of Sukhumi. The most barbaric attack came yesterday, 17 March. This resulted in five of the staff of the sanatorium being killed and 17 wounded.

In connection with this, Pavel Grachev said in conclusion, I am making another protest, and the troops have been set an even more serious task of rebuffing aggression from the Georgian Armed Formations.

Shevardnadze on 'Cynicism' of Grachev Statement

OW1903122593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1145 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Commenting on Pavel Grachev's March 18 statement to the effect that Sukhumi had been bombed by the Georgian aviation, Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze said on Friday [19 March] that such statements are a manifestation of unprecedented cynicism.

"I think that the Russian special services impose their crazy ideas on Grachev and use him as their mouthpiece all over the world," he said.

Defense Ministry Protests Grachev Remarks

LD1903094293 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0800 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] The Georgian Defense Ministry has expressed sharp protest at yesterday's statement by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev. This is in connection with Grachev's claim that the Georgian Air Force possesses seven Su-25 aircraft assembled at the aircraft repair factory in Tbilisi, painted in the colors of the Russian Air Force and bearing Russian insignia. It is these aircraft, according to the Russian defense minister, that are bombing Sukhumi. The Georgian military department categorically refutes this version.

Russian Military Command Warns Georgia

OW1803201893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1958 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Russian military command in Abkhazia has warned the political and military leadership of Georgia that it must not use force against the personnel of the 901st Paratrooper Battalion stationed in Sukhumi. In response to the ultimatum in which Tengiz Kitovani, Georgian Defense Minister, demanded the withdrawal of the battalion from Sukhumi within three days and made a ban on flights of Russian helicopters, the command said that the battalion was never involved in helping either side.

If shells fall in the settlement the battalion occupies or its vicinity, all measures will be taken to immediately destroy whoever fired them, the statement reads. Aircraft flying over the area will be shot down and if the settlement or a five kilometer zone around it is bombed, all the aircraft in the nearby airfields as well as the bombers themselves will be destroyed, the Russian command in Abkhazia warns. It demands security for Russian helicopters flying along an agreed-upon route.

The statement is signed by Colonel General Alekseyev, commander of the Russian Army units in Abkhazia. Russians in Tbilisi Protest Over Abkhazian Action [subhead]

Representatives of the Russian population in Tbilisi have protested "the escalation of hostilities in Sukhumi by Abkhazian separatists." In a statement adopted March 18 at an emergency meeting of the Russian population in Tbilisi they said that "the worst enemies of Georgia intend to play a 'Russian card' at this tragic hour. This serves the interests of reactionary forces in Russia who try to divert attention from the real danger

which is looming over the still weak Russian democracy." The meeting declared that "the blackout in the Russian news media on direct involvement of Russian units in hostilities against Georgia reminds of the way the Afghan tragedy and the downing of the Korean Boeing plane were misreported and of numerous other propaganda stunts that are doomed from the start".

The representatives of the Russian population called on General Reut, commander of Russian Army units in Georgia, to go to Sukhumi and together with Shevardnadze to see the situation for himself and to relay it to the Russian president so that he knows the truth about what is going on in Abkhazia.

More on Russian Warning

LD1803202693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2005 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Gondusov]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—"The personnel of the 901st Paratrooper Battalion stationed in Sukhumi does not help any of the warring sides," says a statement made by the command of the Russian battalion, stationed in Abkhazia, on Thursday.

The document received from Gudauta has been circulated on Thursday by the press service of a plenipotentiary representative of Abkhazia in Russia.

"If force is used against the personnel of the battalion, all possible measures will be taken to immediately destroy all attacking weapons of the Georgian Armed Forces. Aircraft in the areas of the military settlement will be destroyed, and in the event of bomb attacks on the territory of the battalion or within a 5-kilometer range from it, not only helicopters and planes, but all aircraft on the nearby airdrome will be destroyed, the statement said.

Responsibility for possible consequences of the use of force, for threats and blockade of the paratrooper battalion rests with Georgia's political and military leadership, the statement said.

Russia Refuses to Withdraw from Eshera Laboratory

LD1803140993 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0830 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Radio Tbilisi: A few days ago the Georgian parliament demanded the final withdrawal of Russian troops from Abkhazia. One of the reasons for the failure to withdraw was that the Russian military facility in Nizhniye Esheri, on the territory of Abkhazia, which has the status of an individual battalion, is a seismological military laboratory belonging to the 12th central administration of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces. This administration is engaged in issues connected with nuclear weapons. Besides those in Nizhniye Esheri there are similar military units in Plesetsk, on Novaya Zemlya, in Siberia, Kazakhstan, and other places.

At the laboratory in Nizhniye Esheri seismological observations are being conducted of NATO's southern flank in the Near East and part of the Middle East and also in Africa.

At such laboratories, which usually go down to a depth of an 80- storey block of apartments experiments on controlled nuclear explosions are carried out. In the mid-seventies experiments to create a tectonic weapon in the USSR were crowned with certain success. The laboratory in Nizhniye Esheri and others like it were even more secret than the work of the military intelligence.

Russian Su-27 Fighter Reportedly Downed

OW1903122393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1145 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Anti-aircraft gunners shot down a Russian SU-27 fighter-plane over Esheri, near Sukhumi on Friday morning [19 March], the Russian Army Command in Abkhazia has reported to INTERFAX. The aircraft fell In the Odishi village, north of Sukhumi, controlled by Georgian troops.

As the press center of the Georgian Army Command in Abkhazia has reported to INTERFAX, Russian Air Force Major Vazlav A. Shipko, who piloted the plane, died. His body has been retrieved.

Meanwhile, Georgia's Defense Ministry claims that the plane hit a mountain rather than was downed. Unable to eject, the pilot was killed.

Russian Army headquarters in Abkhazia say the aircraft was on a scheduled flight rather than on a combat mission.

Initially, Georgia's Defense Ministry and the Russian Air-Force's press center announced that a Russian SU-25 fighter-plane had crashed on Thursday night.

Shevardnadze Reiterates Desire To Meet Yeltsin

OW1803143493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1407 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Georgia's head of state Eduard Shevardnadze has repeated in Sukhumi that his meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin could help settle the crisis surrounding Russo-Georgian relations. He also expressed the view at a meeting with members of the Abkhazian National Unity Council Thursday [18 March] that a discussion of the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia at the G-7 summit could reduce tension.

Shevardnadze Says Sukhumi 'Has Been Saved'

LD1803161593 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 18 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] According to the POSTFAKTUM agency, Georgian leader Shevardnadze said today that at this stage the mission of the republic's army in Abkhazia has been fulfilled. According to Shevardnadze, one can say that Sukhumi has been saved. Abkhazian representatives have a different opinion of the situation.

Parliamentarians Denounce Russian 'Reactionary Forces'

AU1903110493 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0800 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Statement for the media by 120 members of the Georgian Parliament]

[Text] As is known, the political situation in Russia has become extremely tense recently. The crisis facing the democratic forces is obvious. All this has naturally had reverberations on the internal political situation in Georgia, which has been shown by the already unconcealed armed aggression against the territorial integrity of Georgia by the Russian side commencing 16 March. This of course greatly complicates the negotiations that are currently being conducted between Russia and Georgia. The danger is being created of the Russian side wrecking the negotiations, which suits only reactionary forces. The possibility of a final victory by these forces threatens a catastrophe not only for Georgia but also for the whole Caucasus and, proceeding from this, [can have] possible consequences for the whole world.

One hundred and twenty members of the Georgian Parliament—a quorum is 112—declares its support for Russia's democratic forces and hopes that the whole civilized world will adopt an analogous position so that democratic power will finally be established and consolidated in Russia. This will save Russia; this will save Georgia; this (?will spare) the whole world the greatest danger.

Russia Accused of Trying To 'Tear Abkhazia Away'

OW1803142993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1406 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Georgia's parliament has declared the "hostilities being carried out by Russia against Georgia are a political attempt to tear Abkhazia away and destroy the territorial integrity of the Georgian State." This declaration was part of an address by parliament Thursday [18 March] to the UN, the European Parliament, parliaments world wide and the Russian parliament.

Georgian parliamentarians were of the view that the character and scale of the Abkhazian attack on Sukhumi on March 16 testified to the fact that "the Russian armed forces were playing a decisive role in the operation under the cover of Abkhazian separatists."

This conflict gave even more urgency to the need to remove Russian troops from Georgia, the address continued. The Georgian parliament appealed to the Russian parliament, government and democratic society not to ignore the unpredictable circumstances which could result from "Russia's policy of aggression towards a sovereign state."

The Georgian deputies appealed to the world community to react appropriately to "Russian acts of aggression against Georgia" and oppose the rebirth of the "empire of evil."

Ilya II, the Catholicos of All Georgia, has blamed Russian forces for the bombardment of Sukhumi in a letter to UN General Secretary Butrus-Ghali. Georgia's spiritual leader described the bombing as an "infringement of Georgia's territorial integrity and gross intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state."

The catholicos has forwarded identical letters to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Russian Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov and Aleksey II, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

Abkhaz Leader Reports 110 Killed in Sukhumi

LD1803150693 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1200 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Report by correspondent Vladimir Lenskiy; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] According to a statement by Tamaz Nadareyshvili, head of the Abkhazian Government, 110 people have been killed and more than 1,000 have been wounded over the last four days as a result of artillery shelling and bombing of Sukhumi. A total of 800 buildings have been destroyed. But there is no panic in the city. Today they are proposing to resume supplies of electricity and drinking water in Sukhumi.

And in Eshera, according to a report from the Russian Ministry of Defense, as a result of artillery shelling of the seismological laboratory and a military sanatorium five civilian workers have been killed and eight have been injured.

Moreover, Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze has stated that the behavior of the Command of the Russian unit at the military laboratory in Nizhniye Esheri exceeds the limits. If that unit does not stop sheltering Abkhazian separatists, Shevardnadze said, Georgia cannot guarantee the safety of Russian units.

At the same time, according to ITAR-TASS the fighting is continuing, and not only in Sukhumi. In Ochamchira rayon there were local exchanges of fire today. This morning a Georgian Government Air Force squadron of five Su-25s made a lightening bombing strike on Abkhazian positions. There are no reports of casualties.

Plans for 'Wide-Scale Operation' Said Under Way

LD1803191293 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1728 GMT 18 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Gonduso]

[Text] Moscow, 18 Mar—"The Georgian side continues to pull in yet more subunits into the armed conflict zone, which indicates that preparations for a wide-scale operation are under way," Beslan Bargandzhiya, aide to the chairman of the Abkhazian Republic Supreme Soviet, stated to the ITAR-TASS correspondent over the telephone. In his words, replenishment of the artillery subunits has been particularly active. Eshery, Novyy Afon, and other settlements are being constantly subjected to shelling, including the use of "Grad" installations. There are daily air raids. The number of civilian casualties is growing. The aide to the parliament's chairman has described the situation in Sukhumi as "extremely grave."

Georgian Successes in Abkhazia 18 Mar Reported

AU1903102093 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0800 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] Here is a recording we received on the phone this morning from Abkhazia. We spoke with Zviad (?Mirgatia), an employee at the press center of the Main Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces.

[Begin recording] On 18 March, during the first half of the day, Russian military planes appeared several times over Sukhumi. They flew over the city several times at a high altitude but did not try to descend and launch an attack.

In the afternoon, an enemy boat appeared near Shukara rayon [Sukhumi] that did not approach the shore but soon returned in the direction of Akhali Atoni.

During the whole day, fairly intensive positional battles continued at the River Gumista. The enemy were using both artillery and heavy equipment and grenades and many heavy machine guns. Georgian Armed Forces returned the enemy's fire and successively suppressed their firing positions.

At approximately 1700 [1400 GMT], a heavy artillery column was observed coming from the side of Akhali Atoni that was moving in the direction of Eshera. As a result of artillery fire, four of the six vehicles were destroyed.

At approximately 2100, two boats appeared in the vicinity of Babushara and Agudzera [Gulripshi rayon] that tried to approach the shore. At the same time, they opened fire in the direction of the shore. Shore defense units of the Georgian Armed Forces returned the enemy boats' fire, as a result of which the boats retreated to the open sea.

The night passed off fairly quietly at the River Gumista. There was only sporadic positional shooting on both sides with artillery being seldom in use.

Yesterday, a Russian SU-27 military plane crashed above the village of Odishi [Sukhumi rayon]. According to preliminary information, the pilot, a Major Smirnov, has been captured. An investigation is underway and we will give you more detailed information later on.

As we informed you yesterday, nothing serious has taken place in Ochamchire rayon. There have only been minor small-scale positional battles. The enemy is preserving its positions. [end recording]

'Fierce Battles' Along Gumista River

LD1903113093 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1036 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Roman Zadunayskiy]

[Text] Moscow, 19 Mar—It has been reported to the ITAR-TASS correspondent at the press service of the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia that fierce battles are continuing today between Georgian and Abkhazian troops along the Gumista River front. Georgian troops are carrying out concentrated shelling of the positions of Abkhazia's armed formations using artillery, tanks, howitzers, and the "Grad" rocket launcher.

The press service of the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia also reports that—according to data from the intelligence service of the republic's Ministry of Defense—there are approximately 700 mercenaries among the Georgian troops in Sukhumi, who were recruited in Western Ukraine by General Anatoliy Kamkamidze, commander of the Armed Forces of Georgia.

Local fighting is continuing in Ochamchira Rayon. In the evening, two aircraft of the Georgian Air Force made lightening bombing strikes on the village of Pakuash. There were no casualties or destruction.

Ethnic Azerbaijanis Prepared To Join Armed Forces

OW1803203693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1958 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The ruling body of the all-Georgian "Dayag" association dominated by ethnic Azerbaijanis, sent a message to Eduard Shevardnadze, the country's leader, saying that the Azerbaijani population of Georgia is prepared to join the armed forces to repel the aggression. It emphasizes that "in the face of the threat to Georgia's territorial integrity Azerbaijanis are prepared to join forces with the Georgian Armed Forces to fight any foreign aggression." The authors call on the Russian Federation leaders to "put an end to unauthorized actions and withdraw the army units." If this is not done and the conflict gets out of hand, culminating in unpredictable consequences, "the Russian side will be undoubtedly held responsible," the message says.